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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 610. FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 8TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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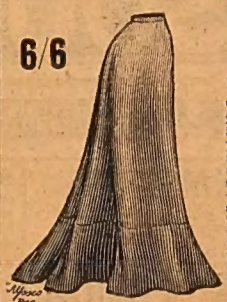

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No. 610.] [One Penny.

For the Week Ending Sept. 8th, 1900.

THE DETECTIVE CONFEDERATE.

"Lord Whintley, Caerdoal Castle, Cornwall," read Clearsite, the well-known private detective, from a card his clerk had brought to him. "Let me see—Whintley. Yes, to be sure, that is the man who goes in for archæological researches, and who, I read in the papers a day or two ago, is to start immediately for Mexico to inspect some monument or other that has lately been discovered."

"The gentleman's waiting in the outer office, sir," reminded the clerk.

"Ask him in," returned the detective; and, arranging an important-looking roll of papers on his desk, he awaited the entrance of the nobleman.

A little man in a long, fur-lined overcoat—it was January, and the snow deep on the ground—was ushered in by the clerk. He had a thick, grey moustache, and wore blue spectacles, and his high fur collar was turned up round his ears.

"Mr. Clearsite himself?" queried the visitor.

"Yes" answered the detective, wheeling an arm-chair up to the fire. "Will you sit down, my lord?"

"Thank you. My time is rather short. I leave London to-day, on a long journey."

"Yes," returned the detective, "I have heard that your lordship was starting for Mexico."

"Dear me!" answered the visitor, as if astonished at the detective's information. "Marvellous! You know that, do you? You detectives seem to find out most things."

Clearsite did not state how he obtained his information; he merely bowed.

"Well, Mr. Clearsite, my visit to you is connected with this journey. My wife—hem—my wife, Lady Whintley, is considerably younger than I am—hem! Lady Whintley, in fact, does not take a great interest in my researches, and is remaining at Caerdoal Castle. Lady Whintley is fond of amusement—not that I make a complaint of that, mind; but—well, there is such a thing as being over confident, particularly when a man is considerably older than his wife, and he is leaving her for a time—eh?"

The detective was leaning back in his chair with his hands folded resting on his chest, and his eyes screwed up to the most penetrating attention. "Jealousy," he was reflecting; "and jealousy is a good grist-bringer to the detective mill."

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"Yes," answered the detective, wheeling an armchair up to the fire.

He simply nodded and waited for further information.

"It is an awkward thing to express," continued the visitor.

"We detectives are accustomed to strange cases," answered Clearsite; "and what you say to me will be kept in the most inviolable secrecy."

His visitor appeared reassured.

"Well," he said, "the truth is, I want my wife watched, and I want you to do the watching. I will make the job well worth your while. I will pay you at the rate of £100 a month. Can you undertake the business?"

Clearsite looked very profound, and after some apparent consideration, agreed to do so.

"It is a very delicate business, you see," he said. "Firstly, have you any suspicion of any favoured lover?"

"Partially," replied his visitor. "Lady Whintley has a cousin, whom she professes to look upon as a brother, and who, doubtless, now I am away, will be a good deal at Caerdoal Castle."

"Yes, and how do you propose that I should do this watching without exciting Lady Whintley's suspicions?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed this strangely jealous husband; "that is where the beauty of my plan comes in. I purpose to send you to Caerdoal Castle on the pretext that when my absence becomes known, the place might be expected to be attacked by burglars. I want you to be always on the watch, taking a turn about the place at night, looking into rooms, examining locks—a sort of person whose eccentricities have always an excuse. Not a bad idea, eh, Mr. Clearsite?"

The detective felt almost aggrieved at the artful inventiveness of the amateur, and in self-defence felt bound to say:

"In theory this sounds easy, but there will be difficulties in execution."

"Of course, but you are clever enough to overcome them. I leave London to-day. Will you go down to Caerdoal Castle to-morrow?"

"Yes, I think I can undertake to do so. Will you give me a line of introduction to Lady Whintley?"

"No, I think not. Say I engaged you at the last moment."

"But perhaps your wife——"

"My wife will be delighted at my forethought. The boat leaves to-night. You will see my name in the list of passengers. I will now wish you good day. I suppose you do not desire anything on account; if you do here is a £20 note."

"Thank you, Lord Whintley, though that was not necessary; but I think it would be preferable you should give a line to your wife."

"I think not. Surely I know better than you. If you do not care for the job——"

"It is not that, but——"

"I have settled the 'but' before, so you go down to-morrow; be wideawake. Mind, Clearsite, don't have any dust thrown in your eyes."

The detective smiled such a smile of confidence that even his visitor seemed to catch the infection, and to smile back, quite strangely to say, contentedly:

"There is one thing, my lord—where am I to communicate with you?"

"I will communicate with you."

"Oh, yes, you will send me an address."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the visitor again almost boisterously, "I will send you a wire when you may expect to see me."

"Expect to see you?"

"To be sure. Don't you understand my journey is a pretence? I shall certainly start, but directly I get a chance I shall find an excuse, which will require me to return. I shall manage to get transferred to a homeward bound vessel, and be back in London within a month."

The detective looked disappointed. His employer seemed uncommonly sharp; one month!—why he had considered this at least a six months' job.

"I will wire to you from London and run down incognito. I will arrive late; you will let me into my own castle, after the servants are in bed. We can have a chat, compare notes, and if necessary I can take myself off for another two or three months while you complete your investigations. Now good-bye. Do not be astonished at any time to hear I am back. Good day," and the visitor was off.

"Well," reflected Clearsite, "I rather despised bookworms and antiquaries, but this man's wits are not dulled by archæological studies. Why, he was born for a detective; while his wife most probably thinks he is absorbed in the past, he has a weather-eye open to the present. A smart idea that journey to Mexico—a decidedly smart idea—but he is a smart fellow; he actually seems to take a delight in finding out what most men try to conceal from themselves. Well, well, my profession is not to seek the motives of my employers, but those of the people I am employed to watch."

He then sent for his clerk, and gave directions for the cases he had in hand, and stated that he should manage to run up to town at least one day a week, and that if

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anything very pressing turned up, a wire addressed to him at Caerdoal Castle would reach him.

* * * * *

The next afternoon Clearsite arrived at Connolly Station, which was a short drive from Caerdoal Castle, at about five, and selecting a cab, allowed himself to be conducted to his destination.

The footman, who opened the door, looked rather suspiciously at the gentleman, who refused to give his card, and asked to see Lady Whintley on business connected with Lord Whintley.

Clearsite had judged it prudent not to disclose his identity to the servants, as the idea of a detective on the premises has a silencing effect among domestics. What he wished was of a diametrically opposite nature.

After being kept some minutes waiting, the detective was shown into a small study, where he was joined by a young military-looking man of about thirty.

"You wish to see Lady Whintley?" interrogated the gentleman, whom Clearsite concluded to be the cousin, "As you did not give your card or name, Lady Whintley in the absence of her husband, asked me to see you. May I ask the nature of your business?"

"The nature of my business," replied Clearsite, "does not render it desirable that my name and calling should be known to the servants, but I have no objection in giving you my card, if you will kindly take it to Lady Whintley; and I should be obliged if you would tell her I saw Lord Whintley yesterday, and that I am come down here at his express wish."

The young man looked with some astonishment at the card which announced the detective's name and profession.

"You say you saw Lord Whintley yesterday?" he asked.

"Yes, just before he started for Liverpool."

"I will give your message to Lady Whintley," said the young man. "If there has been any discourtesy shown to you, you will, I am sure, allow that your mode of introduction was rather suspicious; but since you are following Lord Whintley's instructions, of course Lady Whintley will see you."

He left the study, and, after a short absence, returned with a young woman, handsome and attractive.

Clearsite rose and made his best bow, and the young man, after saying: "Lady Whintley, this is Mr. Clearsite," was about to retire.

"Stay, Frank," she said; "I should like to hear what is the motive of Mr. Clearsite's visit."

"In brief, my lady," commenced the detective, "Lord Whintley called at my office yesterday. He said that the fact of his going abroad might get known, and that consequently burglars might attempt to make a raid on Caerdoal Castle, and that he thought while he was away you would have more security if a detective were resident here, and he engaged me to undertake the business."

"How thoughtful of dear old George, is it not, Frank?" broke out the lady. "I thought he went away with nothing but monuments and inscriptions in his head, and, you see——"

"Yes, it was very thoughtful," interposed the young man. "I suppose, Mr. Clearsite," he continued, "Lord Whintley gave you a note for Lady Whintley?"

"No," replied the detective. "I naturally suggested he should do so, but he would not. I pressed the point, but he got quite irritable, and said I could explain to Lady Whintley."

"Just like George," put in the lady; "he can't bear opposition."

"Yes, but," said the cousin, "we have only Mr. Clearsite's word that he is Mr. Clearsite. He might have come down with a bogus message, and be the very burglar he is presumed to come down to catch."

Clearsite drew himself up to his full height, but he saw that what the young man said was reasonable enough.

"I should propose," said Frank, "that for to-night Mr. Clearsite should go to the village inn, like any ordinary traveller, not mentioning his name at all, and that to-morrow he and I will go up to London together, where, of course, his personality is well known, and then, if all is satisfactory, he will return with me and will enter on the duties intrusted to him by Lord Whintley. I think this is fair, eh, Mr. Clearsite?"

Clearsite was bound to confess that it was so; but, somehow, he formed no very favourable opinion of Cousin Frank, and was convinced that Lady Whintley's reference to her husband as "dear old George," was a clever bit of acting intended for his special benefit.

After all, he did not much regret Mr. Frank's distrust; the next day would bring about a solution in his favour, and Lady Whintley would in the future be bound, as a sort of reparation, to consider, with an extreme indulgence, all his actions.

The next evening he was installed in a position of trust at Caerdoal Castle.

In accordance with his wish, it was given out that he was a sort of steward intrusted with exceptional powers during Lord Whintley's absence. He had free access all over the house; to account for his nightly perambulations it was said that he was a sufferer from insomnia, and he had a small study allotted to him on the ground floor.

His meals were served in his own room; he used to

"In brief, my lady," replied the detective, "Lord Whintley called at my office yesterday."

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walk down to the village, and was soon a popular *habitué* in the Whintley Arms, and at times would drop in for a glass at the less reputable publics.

In the housekeeper's room Mr. Jones, as he chose to be called, was ever welcome; and Biggs, the butler, confessed that Jones was a social fellow, and a cute one into the bargain, who thoroughly appreciated his (Biggs') general conversation and particular gossip.

Three days after his arrival at Caerdoal Castle, Clearsite was taking a cup of tea in the housekeeper's room, in company with Mr. Biggs, and being now on fairly familar terms with these two trusted retainers, he determined to touch delicately on the domestic relations of Lord Whintley and his wife.

"Charming place, this, Mr. Biggs," commenced the detective. "It seems strange that Lord Whintley can't be satisfied here without running over to such an out-of-the-way place as Mexico."

"He is clean mad on anything connected with antiquities; thinks of nothing else," responded the butler.

"Ah!" continued Clearsite; "you don't seem to be going into mourning for his absence. From what I can see, you are expecting company and are preparing for festivities."

"We always have guests at the Castle at this time of the year. The Lord Lieutenant's ball comes off next week, you see."

"And Lady Whintley is going?"

"Yes, of course, and we shall have her sister, Viscountess Brodley, and Lord and Lady Manton of Mossmere, here also, who will go with her."

"And Mr. Frank, of course?" said Clearsite, trying to look very knowing.

"Yes," replied Biggs; "he takes my lord's place in his absence."

Clearsite smiled again, somewhat to Biggs' astonishment.

"You see," added the butler, "Mr. Frank Graham was a ward of Lady Whintley's father, and they were brought up like brother and sister, and my lord always asks him to be here in his absence."

"Oh, he does, does he?" thought Clearsite. "I wonder what can be his game?"

"Lady Whintley is considerably younger than the husband?"

"Yes, considerably," returned Biggs; "but it was a regular love-match on her part. She is as proud of his discoveries as if he were Prime Minister, and it was as much as he could do to prevent her going over to Mexico with him."

Clearsite could not conceal his astonishment.

"True, is it not, Mrs Jellypots?" asked the butler.

"She is wonderfully attached to him," answered the lady; "and he seems to take it all as a matter of course, and never troubles about anything but his books and coins."

"Well, Clearsite, you see I know how to keep an appointment."

"He is wider awake than you think," reflected Clearsite; "but both my lord and my lady must be very clever to keep their troubles so completely to themselves."

"This ball will be a big affair then?"

"Rather," replied Mr. Biggs. "It is what they call the biggest society function of the county for the year. Of course to you, Mr. Jones, being in your confidential position, I may say that to-morrow I go to London to bring Lady Whintley's jewels from the bank. They are worth over thirty thousand pounds, and it would not be safe to keep them down here."

"No, I should think not," ejaculated Clearsite. "Too much of a bait for burglars, if they got an inkling of the matter. Have you ever, Mr. Biggs, had a visit from any of these gentry?"

"Once," replied the butler, "and a daring attempt it was, too. A fellow found out from my lady's maid all about the jewels. It was just before the Lord Lieutenant's ball, and while the family was at dinner a ladder was put up against my lady's dressing-room window and the thieves entered. Luckily, an under-gardener caught a glimpse of them, pulled away the ladder and aroused the house. Mr. Frank, and some other gentlemen, who were staying here, rushed upstairs in a trice, opened the door and found two of the burglars on the floor, and a little fellow in a police-inspector's uniform holding them fast. He explained that he had shadowed the two men, and entered the room by the ladder after them, and had thus caught them in a trap. He asked the gentlemen to help him take them to some place of safety, till he could, with the assistance of a couple of servants drive the rascals over to the lock-up in the nearest town. The two burglars were locked up in one of

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the stables, the police-inspector taking the key. He then went into the dining-room and had a glass of wine, everyone looking on him as a hero. After a little he said he would have a look at his prisoners. Several of the company offered to accompany him but he would not hear of taking anybody out into the cold. He said his investigation would not take above twenty minutes, and away he went. After half-an-hour, as he did not return, someone went to see what detained him, then it was discovered that burglars and police-inspector had disappeared, and after communication with Scotland Yard, it appeared positive that the Inspector was no other than the famous burglar known as 'Slippery Swad,' and that he wore the disguise of a police-inspector under his great coat, in case of emergencies.

"Clever, wasn't it? The three men got off, and they say 'Slippery Swad' has never been caught."

"Quite right," answered the detective, "he has not, and there is a reward of £500 for his capture. He is the artfulest——" But Clearsite drew up short, not wishing to show he knew much about such things, and added —"burglar out, I should say, from what you have told me."

"Yes," answered Biggs, "we were always afraid he would return, for when he posed as the inspector, he asked to go over the place, to see if no other attempt had been made in any other room, and thus learnt all about the castle. But my lord had a system of electric bells fixed to all the doors and windows, called, I believe, 'burglar discoverers,' and these are turned on when the family are at meals, or in bed, as you know, Mr. Jones, and the fact was notified in the public papers; so that, probably, Mr. 'Slippery Swad' heard of this arrangement, and does not consider another attempt quite safe."

Clearsite, when he was alone reflected deeply on what he had heard. His observations at Caerdoal Castle confirmed absolutely the conversation of the housekeeper's room.

Lady Whintley was a loving and devoted wife. Her cousin, viewed by herself as a brother, was apparently trusted by her husband implicitly.

Everybody evidently looked upon Lord Whintley as a man whose every thought was taken up by study, and who took little or no interest in what was passing around him; and yet what a different aspect did the detective's personal experience of Lord Whintley put on matters generally! Could the man be a maniac?

Clearsite was fairly puzzled. There seemed, at present to be no clue to the mystery; all he could do was to wait, and in his case waiting was paid for, which was an extra inducement to patience.

The next day, Biggs, the butler, went to London, and returned safely with the jewels, and the day following, Clearsite received a telegram, worded as follows:

> "Opportunity has surpassed my expectations. Am back in London. Meet me on the lawn to-night, outside castle, at twelve. Be careful that I am not observed.
>
> W—Tley."

"Sharp work," thought the detective. "If he is a madman, there is a decided method about his madness. Anyway, I will put him thoroughly to the proof when I see him to-night."

Clearsite felt so confident in his powers of observation, that he was quite impatient for the meeting, which would, he was convinced, furnish him with a solution of the mystery.

Before half-past eleven, everyone at Caerdoal, excepting the detective, was in bed, and a few minutes before twelve, he opened the glass doors of his study, which led down, with two steps, on to the lawn, and himself noiselessly descended to his rendezvous.

The clock from the castle turret had scarcely struck twelve, when he saw a figure glide cautiously from the shrubberies towards him. The moon was shining, and he had no difficulty in recognizing his employer, dressed just as he had seen him when he called at his offices.

"Well, Clearsite," said the detective's visitor, advancing to his side, and speaking in a low, distinct voice: "archæological mummy, as I daresay you have heard me described, you see I know how to keep an appointment; and you, man, have you any news for me?"

"Very little, my lord. I have been much puzzled."

"Fooh!" interrupted the visitor, with a shudder; "it is cold here to talk! let us go in. What room have they given you?"

"The little study, opening on to the lawn."

"Good! That is handy. Go on, I will follow you. A strange way to steal into one's own castle, is it not? But I am a strange man. Forward, Mr. Clearsite!"

They entered the study, and the detective's visitor drew a chair to the fire, and made himself comfortable.

"So they have bamboozled you, eh, Clearsite?"

"My lord," returned the detective, "as yet I am unable to give a decided opinion one way or another."

"More time needed, eh? Never mind, Clearsite, I have news for you. I have found out positively that the day Mr. Frank Graham went up to London with you, he pawned Lady Whintley's diamonds. I presume the jewel-case was obtained from the Bank by a written order from Lady Whintley, and on its return a seal was put on it in the presence of Mr. Graham, but the stones were unset, and have been replaced with crystals, and the gentleman has been able to pay a debt of eight thousand pounds, for which he was being closely pressed by bill discounters of my acquaintance. What do you think of that?"

The detective eyed his visitor with admiration. Who would believe that such a quiet-looking little man could be so sharp? He had missed his vocation. What a detective he would have made! And what a cunning pair Lady Whintley and her cousin were!

"Have you positive proof, my lord?"

"Well the circumstantial evidence is, to my mind, convincing. First, I have proof that Graham pledged diamonds for a total amount of twelve thousand pounds at three different pawnbrokers. Secondly, I know the bill-brokers, who held his bills for £10,000, and whom he paid on that day. The only link wanting in my evidence is, that the diamonds were Lady Whintley's; but she has valuable diamonds, worth considerably more than that sum, and if they were not hers, where did he get them?"

"True," said Clearsite. "Yet the doubt is an important one."

"You are right. I hope I may be deceived. I know my wife always sends for her jewels from London, to wear at the Lord Lieutenant's ball. Do you know if she has them yet?"

"Yes my lord. Biggs fetched them yesterday."

"Good! Then we can soon decide. Can you distinguish crystals from diamonds?"

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"I would not like to assert positively, my lord."

"Never mind. I am a connoisseur in precious stones. I suppose Lady Whintley sleeps in her same room?"

"I believe so. The second door on the landing."

"Is the dressing-room door locked?"

"No, my lord; her maid sleeps there since you have been away."

"And the jewel-case is in Lady Whintley's room?"

"That I cannot tell."

"I will have a look for it, and if I find it, we will examine the stones."

So saying, the visitor took off his boots.

"But, my lord," interposed the detective, "if you are discovered?"

"Well, if I am? I suppose I have a right to do as I like in my own house, eh, Mr. Detective?"

And creeping from the room with the noiseless footfall of a cat, he left the detective alone.

Clearsite did not exactly like his position; but it was not long before his visitor returned, carrying a brass bound jewel case.

"I have no key to open it Clearsite," he said. "I must break the lock."

"That will betray the act, my lord."

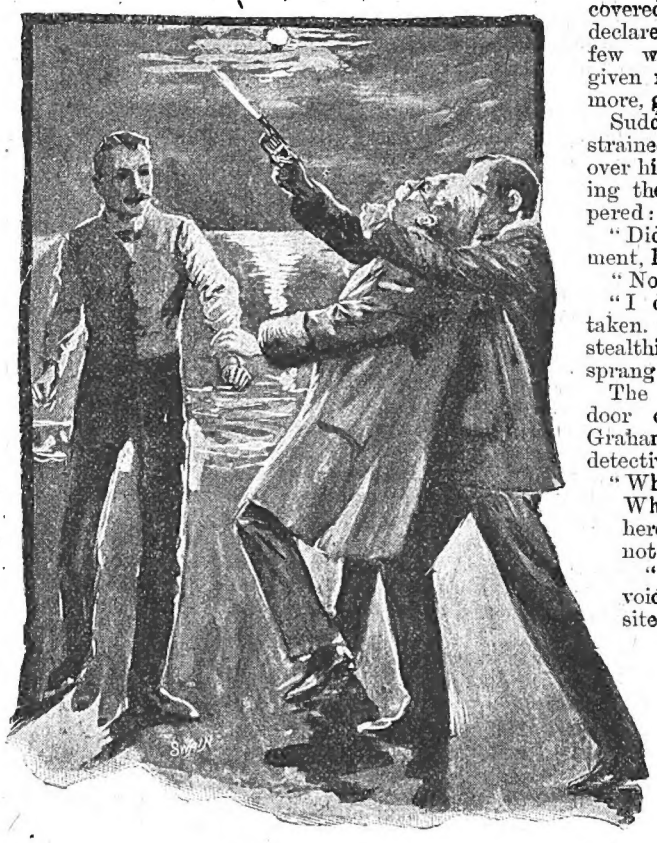
"I suppose it will, but it cannot be helped."

And before the detective could oppose the act, the lid was forced, and the jewels, necklace, ornaments for the hair, bracelets and the other trinkets were strewn on the table.

"My lord, this was most foolish."

"Perhaps it was, but you see I was right. There is not a diamond here. Everyone is an imitation!"

"Are you sure, my lord? They look full of fire, and you see they are set hollow."



The detective had thrown him backwards, the pistol-shot firing upwards.

"Why man, surely you know that crystals nowadays are set just like diamonds? I have made a special study of gems; and the lot of stones there, are not worth fifty pounds."

The man's head fell on his arms, and tears stood in his eyes.

Clearsite was moved at the sight of his distress, and tried to suggest mistakes; a desire of Lady Whintley to help her cousin as a sister a brother.

"I assure your lordship," he added, "I have carefully watched her ladyship, and I believe her to be fondly attached to you."

"Do you? Are you saying what you really believe? Thank you, Clearsite; you have given hope once more," said the man, looking up. "I will take these back to her room, and to-morrow I will come here, the first thing before she is up and can have discovered that I have broken open the jewel-case, then I will have an explanation. Perhaps my action was hasty, but a husband's feelings do not brook delay."

Replacing the jewels in the case, and taking it with him, he once again left the room.

He must have stumbled over something, for Clearsite's sharp ear detected a slight sound; but he was back again in a few minutes, and put on his boots.

"I will leave you for to-night, Clearsite," he said. "To-morrow the first thing, expect me. If, before I come, anything should be discovered I authorise you to declare the truth. Your few words of hope have given me fresh life. Once more, good night."

Suddenly a look of strained attention passed over his face, and approaching the detective, he whispered:

"Did you hear a movement, like a footstep?"

"No my lord."

"I did—I am not mistaken. Hark!" and moving stealthily to the window he sprang out.

The next moment the door opened, and Frank Graham stood before the detective.

"Who was your visitor? What was he doing here? I am sure I did not mistake the voice."

"If you recognised his voice," returned Clearsite, "it is useless for me to delay the discovery that must come to-morrow."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Frank roughly. "Are you that man's confederate? How dared you receive him here?"

"Dared, Mr. Graham," said Clearsite, "is a strong term. Since you recognised Lord Whintley, how dare you speak of him as you do? Surely he has the right to come here when and how he chooses."

"Lord Whintley! What do you mean? Are you mad?"

"You said you recognised the voice of the person in conversation with me?"

"Yes—yes—as that of the notorious burglar, who once imposed upon us all here—as the man known as 'Slippery Swad.'"

Clearsite's face became awful in its expression of baffled rage, as he ejaculated:

"Ah; I see it all. It was he who personated Lord Whintley. He has imposed even on me, and has made me a confederate in stealing Lady Whintley's diamonds. He cannot have got off far. Let us follow immediately."

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"Wait a moment," returned Frank calmly. "Let us first consider what direction he will probably take. We kept very close a discovery we made on his former visit, namely, that he came and departed by means of a boat, which, while he and his confederates were on land, was moored in a creek on the seashore, at about ten minutes walk from the lodge gates. Possibly he will repeat this experiment. He will run across the park, but there is a door in the yard, opening to a short cut to the shore, which reduces the time distance by at least five minutes. Quick, and we shall yet catch him."

The two men started immediately, Frank still in his stockinged feet, and Clearsite regardless of his hat.

They soon reached the confines of the park, and from a little eminence, saw that Frank was right in his conjecture, as there was, in the creek, a boat with two men in it, evidently waiting for someone who had landed.

"We are in time," said Frank, shrinking back into the shadow of the park trees, and advancing in the direction from which he expected "Slippery Swad" would appear.

Clearsite followed.

In a few minutes they perceived the man they were expecting. He darted from the park at a smart trot and directed his steps towards the boat.

Frank impetuously sprang forward and confronted him.

Events pass rapidly at such crises. The burglar's presence of mind was ever at call.

He scarcely stopped, as he pulled a revolver from his pocket, and pointed it straight at his assailant, and, in an instant a sharp report rang out.

Luckily indeed for Frank, Clearsite's experience in criminal catching had come to his aid, or the young man's chance for life would have been small.

The detective had allowed Frank to face the burglar; he himself had rushed unperceived behind him, and throwing his arms round his neck at the critical moment, had thrown him backwards, the pistol-shot firing upwards.

The men in the boat immediately made off, and Frank and the detective returned with their captive to the Castle, where he was temporarily secured in a cellar, under lock and key.

Frank undoubtedly owed his life to Clearsite, and readily enough promised that, with the exception of Lord and Lady Whintley, no one should know how cleverly the detective had been duped.

Clearsite, consequently, drew the £500 for the capture of "Slippery Swad," and, in addition, received a handsome present from Frank.

Moreover, the detective's name was in everybody's mouth, and his reputation was considerably increased, as he received all the glory of bringing such a notorious culprit to justice.

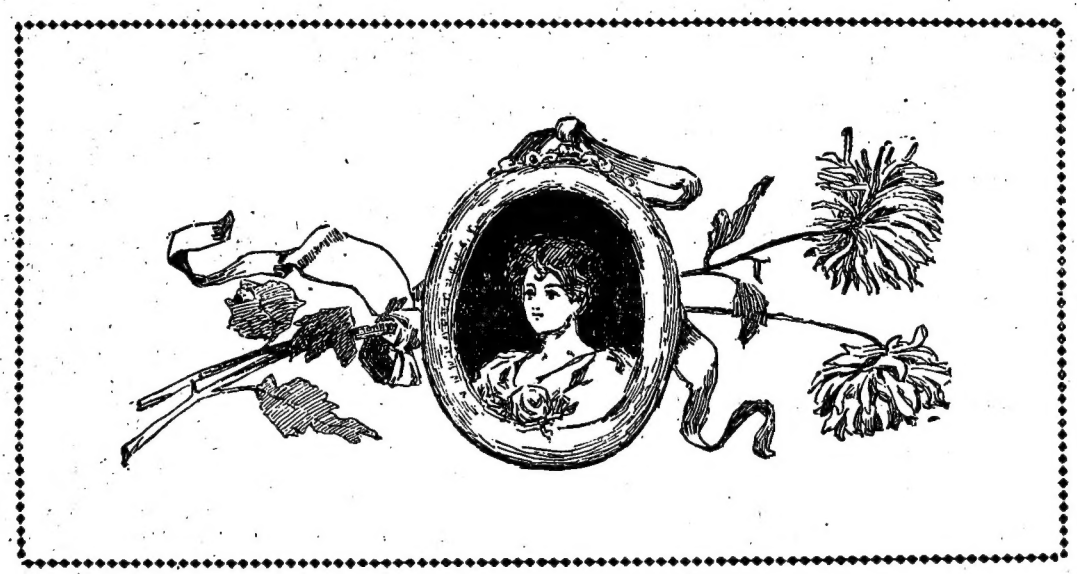
When brought up for trial "Slippery Swad," in the pockets of whose fur-lined overcoat Lady Whintley's diamonds had been found—he having only replaced on her table the empty jewel-case—was condemned to a lengthy term of penal servitude, which he richly deserved; but before being removed from the dock, he somewhat astonished the judge and the court by exclaiming:

"And how about my confederate? Surely I thought I should be safe if I engaged a detective."

Clearsite became very pale and fidgeted about uneasily, particularly when the criminal winked at him knowingly; but without further explanation, "Slippery Swad" was removed to the cells below, and his professional engagement with Clearsite was never made public, till this true history was written.

And even here, names are so concealed, that the pseudonym of Clearsite effectually hides the individuality of the detective who was so cleverly imposed upon by one of the sharpest of modern burglars.

Ida Dawson.



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The Rolling Platform.

MONSIEUR Legrand, of Chambéry, read thoughtfully the following advertisement aloud to himself, in the dignified seclusion of his office:

At Whitsuntide, the Company of the South-Eastern Railway of France will issue return tickets to Paris for all classes, available for eleven days, from the 25th of May to the 4th of June, inclusive. These tickets can be taken at all Stations of the Company.

Monsieur Legrand took a pencil and made a calculation of the cost of the journey for himself, Marius Legrand, silk merchant and draper of Chambéry, his wife and his daughter Céleste.

"Three first-class tickets, 234 francs; other expenses, 250 francs. Lodging: when I go to Paris, I pay four francs for my room; with the Exhibition going on, will have to give double. For three people eighteen-twenty with attendance—so, for nine days, 180 francs. So much for food, so much for carriage hire, theatres, etc. Total 790 francs—at least 800 to 900 francs, let us call it 1,000 francs (£40) at once. It is agonising to spend so much money. But Céleste will be enchanted. Ever since she was seven years old, have I promised her a visit to Paris. And this is the year of the Exhibition! I can afford this folly, I will do it. Va!"

Without waiting any longer, Monsieur Legrand opened the door of his office that communicated with the rest of the house and shouted in a loud voice, "Eloise, Céleste, pack up. We go to Paris on the 25th."

He was answered by two shrieks of joy.

Monsieur Legrand had not been to Paris for fifteen years. And why? Because this dear man was so fat, moving was disagreeable to him. When he entered a room first you saw his waistcoat and then, some time after, the rest of Monsieur Legrand. For a long time he had said good-bye to his feet and could only see them in a looking-glass. When, therefore, it was a question of moving his enormous person he thought twice about it, and it was only his charming good heart and wish to give pleasure to his wife and daughter that induced him to undertake this great expedition.

Madame Legrand was a great contrast to her husband, she was as thin and flat as he was round and heavy. She was also as discreet and reserved as he was expansive and noisy. Céleste, their daughter, had the talent, or rather the good fortune, to conciliate in her person the best qualities of both parents, and formed a most seductive whole. She was charmingly proportioned and added to this a smiling face, with large, dark eyes and golden hair, and red lips that opened on two rows of pearls. In fact she was acknowledged to be the grace and the beauty of Chambéry.

This journey was, no doubt, a great event.

It caused good Monsieur Legrand much agitation. It was only when they were safely off, shut in a compartment by themselves, that he heaved a sigh of satisfaction and mopped his forehead with one of his own best silk handkerchiefs. Then he counted all the small parcels, made sure of his pocket-book, all his keys, and counted the change in his purse. I have said they were alone in their compartment. Monsieur Legrand took a quarter up himself and was able to repose at ease, without the fear of cramping other people. When approaching a large station, he thought it wise to take precautions, however; he disposed the parcels artfully on the disengaged seats, and when the porters, as French porters always will, at large stations, flung open the door, shouting out "Dijon, ten minutes," Monsieur Legrand blocked up the opening with his fairy form. All the travellers who approached retreated before this fortification, and his plans would have been crowned with success, had he only continued them a few minutes longer. But, thinking all would go well, he moved back a few seconds before the train departed, and in this moment of time a young man quickly jumped in.

"The carriage is full," said Monsieur Legrand angrily.

"Not quite, I think," said the newcomer coolly; "it seems to me four or five places are still vacant."

He sat down peacefully in the corner facing Céleste. He was a well-dressed young man with a distinguished air. He drew a newspaper out of his pocket and proceeded to read it, without troubling himself more about Monsieur Legrand than if that gentleman were still in Chambéry.

Suddenly a packet in the net above Céleste fell on her hat, and she gave the charming cry of a frightened bird. The young man sprang to his feet, seized the packet, inquired if his fellow-voyager were hurt—then resumed his seat, but not his reading. This accident had permitted him to study Céleste, and he judged her charming countenance more worthy of study than fights in the French Chamber of Deputies. At the same time Monsieur Legrand, touched by the politeness of the young man, felt his anger evaporate and began a conversation with him. The young man replied pleasantly to the father, while admiring the daughter. Soon Monsieur Legrand had told him his name, his business, his place of residence and many other details. But to all, the young

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man only said, "Ah!" It was not compromising. While he talked pleasantly, he kept to generalities and told them nothing of himself or his business. Monsieur Legrand remarked that they were going to see the Exhibition, they talked a long time on the subject.

"What I desire to see above all, is the Palace of Costume," said Céleste.

"I, the Beaux Arts," said Madame timidly.

"I, the Rolling Platform," exclaimed Monsieur Legrand. "To move round without moving oneself—what a splendid invention! We will go on it to-morrow morning at ten o'clock precisely."

The young man then explained the working of the Rolling Platform, the best way to get to it, and especially indicated with care the point at which it was best to get on. They said good-bye to him at the station in Paris, with the greatest friendliness. Monsieur pressed his hand effusively, Madame Legrand bowed gracefully and Céleste smiled upon him in the most enchanting manner.

"*Ciel!*" cried Monsieur Legrand, "I have forgotten to ask the name of this most charming young man." He rushed after their late companion, but alas! he was not built for running and soon had to give up the chase.

He returned. "Alas! it is ended," said he, "we shall see him no more. What a misfortune!"

Madame Legrand was also sad, Céleste seemed unconcerned. Young ladies sometimes can see far into mysteries, and Céleste had a presentiment that she would again see this delightful young man.

When the next day, at ten o'clock precisely, the family Legrand arrived at the point indicated to ascend the Rolling Platform, the first person they saw was their travelling companion.

Monsieur Legrand gave a cry of joy, Céleste blushed. After greeting them with much amiability, the young man, to show them how to do it, jumped lightly on to the lower platform, which only travels at the rate of four kilometres an hour, and from that he jumped on to the second, which goes round twice as fast. Céleste followed him with the same lightness.

But it was quite a different operation for Monsieur and Madame Legrand. He had no agility, and as to Madame, full of fear, she did not dare to place her foot on the rolling machine: so that the young people were soon far away from the father and mother, who remained paralysed in the same place, vainly asking how they were to rejoin their daughter.

"Happily," said the good father, naively, "she is in good hands."

At last, in fact, in a quarter of an hour, the Rolling Platform had rolled round and back to the same point and a well-known voice called to them:

"Oh! how amusing it is."

It was Céleste, leaning on the balustrade, by the side of their amiable friend. Neither seemed to be tired of their present employment. So this time Monsieur and Madame Legrand, with great courage, mounted on the platform in the best way they could. Once there, they did not venture to move, but remained firmly clutching the sticks with round heads, placed at intervals to support the passengers. So they followed the young people in a maze—but at a long interval. At last they were delivered by their daughter herself, who approached, smiling and holding the hand of her friend, no doubt only to assist her in keeping her balance. They lunched together, and together visited the different palaces and pavilions. They only left each other in the evening, then making an appointment for the next day.

"It is too tiresome," cried Monsieur Legrand, on entering his hotel, "I have again forgotten to ask the name of this too charming person. To-morrow I must remember."

But the next day he again forgot. He only remembered at the end of four days, by which time they had become so intimate with him that he never quitted them from morning till night. He finally told them to address him as Henri Leblanc, and as Monsieur Legrand knew this was a name of good repute in the commercial world of Paris, he was quite satisfied. Of course it did not follow that their friend was a member of the important firm of the "Bon Marché," but still the name of the principal partner was the same, and all things are possible.

Anyhow, the Legrand family were out for a holiday and were not disposed to let unworthy suspicions cloud their pleasure in Monsieur Henri Leblanc's society.

It must be confessed the confiding father of the family was a little imprudent. Being lazy and disinclined for exertion, he got into the habit of handing Monsieur Henri Leblanc his purse to take tickets for the various entertainments they went to, instead of struggling himself to the box office; so, by degrees, Leblanc became general paymaster—let it be well understood—with Monsieur Legrand's money.

The days passed all too swiftly till the ninth day came; on the next day their return tickets expired, their holiday was ended. They must bid a sad farewell to the delights of Paris and return to the quieter pleasures of Chambéry.

Céleste was nearly in despair; charming as Monsieur Henri Leblanc had invariably been still he had said nothing that distinctly or definitely implied a wish to annex for ever her charming self. Could it be he was trifling with a damsel who had devastated—yes, the expression is not too strong!—devastated the hearts of Eastern France? So Céleste on this last day put on her prettiest frock and most becoming hat, determined to hasten matters to a crisis. Also Monsieur Legrand, answering to a hint from Madame, filled his purse well, to provide for a fitting last entertainment to their delightful friend.

"As I am at the Credit Lyonnais, my dear," remarked the good merchant, "I may as well draw sufficient money to pay our hotel expenses and travelling extras. It will save me another journey to the bank. I will therefore write a cheque for 800 francs."

The prudent Madame demurred to this.

"Is it not unsafe to carry about so large a sum in the crowded Exhibition?" she said nervously; "we are specially warned by the police to beware of pickpockets."

But Monsieur Legrand only laughed at her fears and stuffed his purse gaily with 100 franc notes. Not only this, but he explained the whole transaction to Monsieur Henri Leblanc, who had come to fetch them from their hotel in the morning to go to the Exhibition.

"It is safer to carry the money with you," their mentor said gravely, "than to leave it in the Hotel at the mercy of the servants," and he related one or two stories of hotel robberies that much horrified Madame Legrand.

"The money can, however, be left in charge of the manager," she ventured to remark timidly.

"No, no, my good friend," said Henri, "believe me, it is better to trust to oneself only in these cases. What is the manager after all, but a paid servant of the company? I know nothing definite against him, but still ——"

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So Monsieur Legrand trotted forth with the whole 800 francs in his purse, and they all went gaily in at the Grand Entrance in the Place de la Concorde. They went to the Palais de l'Optique and saw the reflected pictures of the observations taken of the moon by the enormous telescope, which truth compels me to say were not admired by them.

"The moon resembles exactly the appearance of a patient recovering from a bad attack of smallpox," said Céleste, shuddering. But she found pleasure in the exhibitions of electric light effects in the same palace, the imitations of storms, thunder and lightning, and the curious examples of the Röntgen rays. From there they passed to the Palais de Costume on the right. It was the ladies' fourth visit to this enchanting place. Monsieur Legrand remained on a chair outside while Henri Leblanc accompanied Madame and her daughter on their round of inspection.

Monsieur Legrand's purse had some time before been intrusted to his dear young friend to pay the extra one franc fifty centimes each required at the entrance of both the Palais de l'Optique and the Palais de Costume. Monsieur Legrand sat outside and amused himself by planning a veritable feast in the way of a dinner in the evening. At last the others appeared.

"There is yet time," exclaimed Céleste, "for just a round on the charming Rolling Platform before we go to our lunch."

They took their way to the nearest point for getting on, and arrived there, having climbed a steep staircase to do so. Monsieur Legrand sank breathless on the seat p ovided at the side.

"Excuse me for one moment," said Monsieur Leblanc hurriedly, "I see a friend I must speak to—I will return immediately."

He sprang on the Rolling Platform and was out of sight in a few seconds.

They waited, chatting gaily, for him to come round again on the platform. They waited half-an-hour—an hour—in fact, they may be waiting there still, for the nice, courteous young man whom they never saw again.

SADI GRANT.

"I CANNOT say yes, Walter. I shall always be a sis—"

"Sister to me? No, you won't."

"Yes, Walter; your brother Charles proposed to me last night, and I accepted him."

A BAYSWATER young man is quite "gone" on *Hamlet*. He was reading it to the girl of his heart last week. "Or if thou wilt need marry, marry a fool," he read.

"Is that a proposal, dear?" she asked.

"Yes, darling," he replied.

And they settled it there and then.

THE angriest man on earth was a fellow who was walking home about eleven o'clock at night, when a stranger drove up alone in a dog-cart, and said:

"Ain't you tired of walking?"

"Yes, I am," said the man; "much obliged," and started for the vehicle.

"Well, why don't you run a while?" said the man in the trap as he drove off.

A Splendid Offer.

AT the special request of a large number of readers we propose to repeat the offer made some time ago:

We will give a beautiful **INDIA INK and CRAYON PORTRAIT**, size 15×12, mounted on plate sunk mount, 24×19, to anyone who will bring or send us 7s. and a Coupon from the

ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWS.

These portraits are of the finest artistic merit. They are quite permanent, being finished by the Air Brush with Indelible India Ink, making them more permanent than any of the old styles of portraits, and they will last a lifetime.

They would cost you, if obtained through an artist, many times as much.

Have you Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, or Child's Photograph which you wish Enlarged?

Perhaps some dear one has passed away whose likeness is now faded, and could be preserved before it is too late.

Special Offers to Relatives of Soldiers and Sailors.

Doubtless there are amongst our readers many thousands who have relatives at the front—brothers, or husbands, or fathers, or sons. Doubtless some of these brave fellows will never return to the old home. Perhaps you have a photograph of your husband, or your brother, or your son, which you want to preserve for years to come, and yet you have not the means to pay two or three guineas to have this done in the ordinary way. We, therefore, shall make a reduction of a shilling on every photograph of a Soldier or Sailor sent to us.

You will certainly get a genuine bargain by availing yourself of this offer. The enlargements can be made from any photograph, large or small, tin-types, or any kind of glass picture, provided the print is legible. All the enlargements are of the head and shoulders only.

Write your name and address plainly in ink on the coupon to be found in the current number of the

ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWS.

Write your name and address plainly in ink on the back of the portrait you are sending us. Get a postal order for 7s. (if the photograph be that of a soldier or sailor get a 6s. postal order). Place all these in an envelope, or make a securely packed parcel of them, and address it to the PORTRAIT EDITOR, *Pearson's Weekly*, Henrietta Street, London, W.C. The money and coupon must accompany each order, otherwise your photograph will be returned to you.

Any number of enlargements can be made from one photograph.

A Reduction of Threepence

on each enlargement, if the order is for two or more from the same photograph, will be made, but a coupon must be sent for each enlargement required.

This offer will remain open until Saturday, August 25th, and orders will be treated in rotation. The sooner you send the sooner you will get your photograph.

All photographs—particularly those on glass—should be securely packed. Although all possible care will be taken, we do not hold ourselves responsible for photographs damaged or lost in transit.

A sample enlargement is on view at these offices. Below are other addresses where the enlargements may be seen:

Portsmouth.—A. B. Bennett, 408 Commercial Road, Landport.
Southsea.—L. Hillyer, 9 Green Road.
Glasgow.—William Love, 221 Argyle Street (opposite Central Station), and William Barr, 88 Sauchiehall Street.
Liverpool.—F. W. Edwards, 122 Pembroke Place, and Henry Jones (tobacconist), 184 Oakfield Road.
Blackpool.—Coppock (newsagent).
Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Messrs. T. and G. Allan, 18 and 20 Blackett Street.
Sunderland.—Edward Thompson, 263 High Street West.
Manchester.—J. Matthews, 88 Oxford Street, and Messrs. M. Carr and Co., 38 Alexandra Road, Moss Side.
Stockport.—Sisson, 49 Middle Hillgate.
Darlington.—North of England School Furnishing Company, Blackwellgate.

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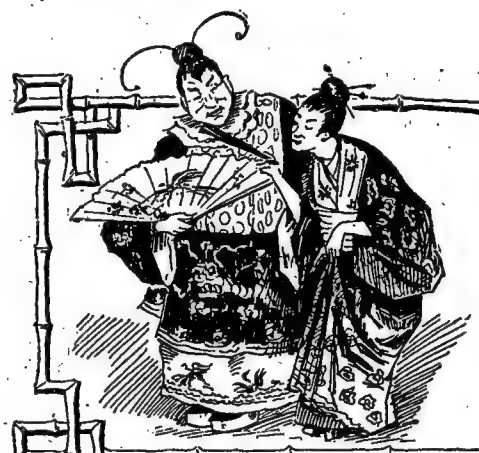

Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXII.—He Establishes a Home for Friendless Dogs and is Surprised at Results.

THE Bowsers had just finished dinner when the area bell rang, and a minute later a discussion was heard between the cook and a small boy who had a dog at his heels.

Mr. Bowser hurried down stairs and was absent for a quarter of an hour. When he returned, Mrs. Bowser looked at him in a way that called for an explanation, and he explained:

"It was a boy with a dog. I have shut the dog up in the shed."

"But what do you want with a dog?" she queried.

"Nothing, my dear. Have you ever noticed how many homeless dogs there are in the streets?"

"No; I never did."

"I didn't suppose you had, knowing how selfish and cold-hearted you are; but I have. At this very minute there are probably a thousand friendless, homeless dogs wandering about the city."

"And is that our fault?"

"In one way, no. In another way we have a duty to perform. As human beings—as men and women with souls and hearts—we should take heed of the sufferings of the brute creation. What is more sad than to see a poor dog skulking about in fear and hunger? That he is an outcast and outlaw is not his fault. The world owes him a living, the same as it does a man. Humanity owes him food and kind treatment."

"Perhaps you are going to found a dogs' home?" asked Mrs. Bowser after awhile.

"You have hit it exactly," he replied, as the cat came out from under the sofa and sniffed the atmosphere as if she suspected the presence of a canine. "Yes, madam, I have established a home for friendless dogs, and it already has an occupant. I have arranged with several boys to bring me every friendless dog they can find. Each canine shall have bed and board for a couple of weeks at least, and I have no fear that the public will not take them off my hands. You are not with me in the charity, of course, but I shall carry it through just the same. There goes the bell, and that means another dog."

Mr. Bowser opened the door to find another boy and another dog. He was paying the lad and giving him words of praise at the same time when the f mily cat, which had followed him down stairs, took a hand in.

With a yeowl and a howl she lit on the dog's back, and for two or three minutes Mr. Bowser, the boy, the dog and the cat were all mixed up. Then the cat retreated, and the dog was conducted to the asylum.

"Phwat's all this about?" demanded the cook, as Mr. Bowser returned through the kitchen.

"My dear woman, I am being kind to homeless dogs," he replied.

"And are others to come?"

"I hope so. Yes, I am in hopes to pick up about fifty more."

"Then I quits my job in the mornin'! I have never

"What is more sad than to see a poor dog skulking about in fear and hunger?"

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yet worked in a dogs' home, and, please heaven, I never will! No use to talk to me, sir. I can stand a cat or two about, and I can put up with a cranky man, but I'm no lady assistant in a dogs' home."

"I suppose you've been conspiring with the girl," said Mr. Bowser, as he got back up stairs. "But she can

"You miserable old dog-thief!"

leave and be hanged to her. I know I am right in this thing. I know that my course is dictated by the sentiment of mercy, and the dogs' home shall go on in spite of everything."

Mrs. Bowser was slipping upstairs without a word in reply when the bell rang again and dog No. 3 appeared. He had scarcely been put in the shed when Nos. 4 and 5 turned up.

The boys were having wonderfully good luck in coming across wanderers, and it was cash down and words of encouragement in every case.

By ten o'clock Mr. Bowser had nine dogs in the shed, and after exhausting the scraps in the kitchen he had sent to the butcher's for meat and bones. He was enjoying that complacency felt by all men who have nobly performed a duty when there came a loud peal at the front door. He hastened to open it, to find a woman on the steps. She had something to say, and she began at once:

"A nice sort of man you are, I must say! Where's my dog?"

"Your dog, madam?" he queried.

"Yes, my dog! He was stolen out of the yard half-an-hour ago, and the boy was seen to enter this house. So you've got to encouraging boys to steal dogs, have you? I'll have him or bring the police here!"

"My dear woman, don't get excited. If your dog is here, he was taken by mistake, and I am sorry for it. I received him as a homeless, friendless canine."

The dog was found among those in the shed, and the woman went away muttering and scolding.

She had not been gone ten minutes and Mr. Bowser was about to lock up for the night, when the door-bell was almost jerked out by the roots. It was a man this time.

He pushed his way into the hall, and, shaking his fist under Mr. Bowser's nose, he shouted:

"You miserable old dog thief, but I am going to drive your head through the wall!"

"What—what's the matter?" was the stammering query.

"The matter is that you are encouraging a band of Hooligans to steal people's dogs and that one of them has stolen mine and brought him here. Trot him right out, or I'll thump you till you can't holler!"

"My dear man——"

"Trot him out, I say!"

The shed was visited and the missing dog recovered, and his still indignant owner talked fight till the gate closed behind him.

Mr. Bowser was wondering over the wickedness of his assistants when Mrs. Bowser came down stairs.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to turn the rest of the dogs loose and abolish the home?" she presently asked.

"Never!" he shouted in reply. "I set out to establish a home, and I'll do it or perish in the attempt!"

At that moment the sounds of an awful racket came up from the shed. The seven dogs left had entered into a battle royal, and the noise was one to rouse the whole neighbourhood.

Mr. Bowser dashed downstairs and out into the yard, and in another second he had the door of the shed open. He was going to yell at the dogs and stop the row, but no sooner was the door thrown open than the fighting, struggling seven made a rush. So did Mr. Bowser.

Instinct warned the dogs that he was to blame for the row, and they stopped fighting among themselves to snap at his heels. It was a neck-and-neck race, with a bulldog trying to find a place to hang on to, but Mr. Bowser not only reached the fence, but went over it into the next yard and wiped out a bed of flourishing onions as he struck the earth.

It wasn't five minutes before twenty men and boys appeared, and one of them had wit enough to let the dogs out. They went out snarling and howling and fighting, with the bulldog having the best of it, and amid the general uproar Mr. Bowser climbed back into his own yard and got into the house. Mrs. Bowser was quietly awaiting him.

"Well, how many bites did you get from your homeless, friendless dogs?" she asked as she surveyed his tattered trousers' legs.

He turned red and glared at her and swallowed the lump in his throat, but he made no reply. He was so mad and scared and upset that he couldn't even charge her with conspiracy, and after seeing that the front door was locked he followed her upstairs and simply managed to growl out:

"Woman, you and I will settle this thing in the morning!"

M. Quad.

Next week:

He Tunes His Own Piano, and Thereby Saves £5.

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A Game of Cross Purposes.

"I THINK I was frank—I don't think I deceived you, Meg. Unless a fellow has a practice left him by his father, ready to step into, it's going to be uphill work, dear. I—I thought I stated things clearly enough before you came out, didn't I, sweetheart?"

There was a break in Eric Blandford's voice as he faced his young wife—the wife of barely a year. That year had been long enough to convince him that the unalloyed bliss he had imagined married life to be was all a myth—and further, that his wife was painfully, incurably English.

When, five years before, they had met at an informal dinner party at the house of his own pet, particular chum, he had thought her delightfully so. Her quiet manner, both in dress and voice—her perfect intonation when she spoke (which was seldom) came as a welcome relief from the noisy dash and freedom both in manners and dress, of the young Australian girls of the party.

Two generations back, Eric himself had been English, pure and simple too—for his father, a colonel of an English regiment retired on half-pay, had come out to settle in Tasmania and to end his days there. The end had come sooner than he had expected, and before Eric, his second boy, was out of his articles.

Then had come the uphill pull, and for lack of healthy competition in Hobart, Eric had come to Sydney. It was there, in the early days of his struggle with the world, that he had met Margaret Weyman, and it seemed to him that a strong hand had been stretched out to help him.

She had only looked at him with those steadfast grey eyes of hers in a way that said as plainly as words, "I believe in you"—and a man will give up the whole world and all that is therein—or better still, conquer it—to win the woman who tells him that.

An impetus had been given to his ambition and it was not long before he had his foot upon the first rung of the ladder of success.

It was at this time that the English mail brought him much bad news. Meg had suddenly lost her father from heart failure, and her mother, whose devotion had been proverbial, had survived him but a day.

More than that, it had come as a severe shock to his children, of whom, fortunately, there were only two—that, when all had been settled by his lawyer, the comparative luxury and comfort in which they had been reared must henceforth be a thing of the past; for they had lived, like many others, up to every penny of their income.

Jack, Meg's only brother, who was one of the spoilt and only boys one meets with so often, had calmly informed her that one of them must turn out as there was "only just enough," as far as he could see, "for one to scrape along on."

Like the cad that he was, when a little self-denial would have made enough for both—he had put it so that a girl of spirit such as Meg's could take it only one way.

With Meg, that way was soon decided on. She was fairly accomplished and had been given what is vaguely known as a liberal education.

She determined to turn the latter to account by taking a post as governess, and had already obtained a morning engagement as an opening, and was beginning to like her work, when she received from Eric Blandford—who had written her as a friend these five years—a formal offer of marriage.

The letter had followed on his success in his last law exam., and was to tell her that he was now fully qualified and in partnership with a fellow who had been articled with him.

"There will be no home for us at first, Meg, save the home that we can make of each other's society; but I think we can be very happy in rooms, at least, for a time."

So Eric had written, and then he pleaded, as men do, the theory of the "half loaf better than none," and though he could not be much with her, they would see each other every day, and he would know she was cared for and not dependent on any stranger for that which he, and he only, had a right to give her.

That was nearly a year ago now—but on the wet, dark Australian winter morning when the Blandfords started that ever painful and utterly useless policy of "having things out," it might have been ten, so far away did it seem to both.

They had got beyond mere disillusionment, and had reached the period of mutual recrimination.

Very hard, very bitter had grown the little white face of Meg, with its clear-cut, sharply-defined features, as she descanted at length, and for quite the fiftieth time, on the absence of good taste, refinement, or tact in the boarding-house of Mrs. Miggleson.

How vulgarly coarse those girls were—with their cockney twang and shoppy conversation—as if it were not possible to leave their type-writers at the office for once.

Then those hateful meat breakfasts that were so coarse, and so unlike the dainty English refinement she had been used to. And the men—well—they were beyond even Meg's power of description, and certainly were of a type she had never known at home

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"But, Meg, dear, you forget," protested her husband, "they are English; their fathers were as English as yours, or at least, your husband's. You will see it all in time—it is only the natural result of climatic influence."

So Eric argued, but all to no purpose—and there was much more that Meg contrived to say, with a selfish woman's heedless thought of the pain she was inflicting, while Eric went through the painful process of dressing; and then, finding any words of his useless, he left her without even their good-bye kiss—and they had never forgotten that before.

He turned at the door as an afterthought struck him.

"Oh! by-the-bye, the Sessions begin to-day, Meg. I may not be home to lunch, and am afraid I may not be back to dinner even. Don't wait for me, dear, go up alone. You can bear it perhaps for once. It's not for long, now."

He paused, his hand on the door; but there was no sign of relenting on the cold, pure face that was like a vase of crystal, in which he saw himself with all his weaknesses, his delusions, his mistakes, with cruel distinctness.

He snatched a hasty breakfast, and thought hard as he ran for his ferry-boat.

"Poor little girl—perhaps it was hard on her—hard in any man to expect a woman to give up so much—all the little comforts and refinement, such as a temperament like hers would demand. What right had any man to ask it?"

Now it chanced that the first thing Meg noticed when she listlessly commenced to dress was a small, red-leather bound book, a note-book apparently, that she had never remembered to have seen before, and with the natural curiosity of her sex she took it up, opening it at the fly-leaf. There, in the bold, clear hand that she knew so well, she found the simple words written "My Diary," and underneath, her husband's name in full.

She felt a sneak—that is, the less feminine half of her did. The other half said:

"Why not look, he has no business to hide even this from you."

With the true instinct of a woman, she turned to the end first. The entries ended on the day before. They were very simple.

"Lunched at the A.B.C., 6d. I am getting economical for Meg's sake. I am a selfish brute, I know, but I'd do anything to make her happy, if I knew how. It used not to be so difficult—or perhaps it seemed easier and I didn't notice it."

She read on—turning back over a week of similar entries—reading now on her awakened conscience at the end of each roll and coffee lunch, "for Meg's sake," then came a week-end entry that, to Meg, seemed to be written in such large type that it blotted out aught else.

"No smoke for a week—astonishing how well a man gets on without a smoke when he sets his mind to it—it's quite easy."

Then the letters got so large that Meg had to brush her arm across her face to make sure she was reading properly, and two big splashes fell on the open page before her. To some women tears are the eye-openers of the soul.

All that day she racked her poor little brain. What could she do to show Eric, to tell him she hated herself for being the selfish little brute that she was, thinking only of herself, and never of the daily sacrifice of his life for her. How unhappy she had sent him to his work that morning; if only she could go over to the office now and tell him.

She bathed her eyes and went in to breakfast which she had suddenly remembered. But no, for all through the long, dreary day the rain came down pitilessly, in sheets, as it only can rain in Australia. The wind rose too, and there was a talk of the ferry-boats being delayed and perhaps stopped, for they could not make their wharves.

If it would hold up so that she might meet each one in the dusky evening light, in case he came, to tell him all and to welcome him.

But Fate was not kind in one little respect to-day as it seemed, for the rain did not abate one jot.

She had finished her last book, too, and was reduced to flattening her little nose on the window pane as she had done when a child, watching the rain as it swirled down the gutter of the steep, rock-hewn road to the ferry at the Point.

Her sensitive nature, once aroused, magnified her thoughtlessness into a crime, and she was feeling utterly miserable when a knock at the door of her room was followed by Mrs. Miggleson with a cup of tea.

Now, not being a first-class boarding establishment, it was not customary for boarders at Mrs. Miggleson's to be supplied with afternoon tea—it was entirely an extra, and therefore all the more refreshing to Meg who, in her distress of mind, had forgotten to order it.

Even the motherly face of Mrs. Miggleson (like Mrs. Rumbelow, of Davy Garrick fame, she rejoiced in the possession of "seven blessed children") was refreshing, as she set down the cup with a jerk and a "thought you'd like a cup o' tea, Mrs. Blandford, seein' as it was a wet day."

Meg almost forgot it was Australian tea, and such an exhilarating effect had it, that she soon set about devising some new plan of showing her penitence.

To go out was impossible. Eric, too, had said that he might not be in to dinner. Surely he would be in soon after, a happy thought struck her.

Amongst her English treasures was an evening bodice that she had never worn; but it was an exact copy of the one that Eric had seen her in that first day they had met—five years ago—when each looked out on such a different view of life.

It was a thick corded silk—white—a tiny square, cut *à la Greque* at the neck, and edged with a key pattern in gold thread. He had mentioned it often after in his letters and of how it suited her pure classical features.

So far she had had no opportunity to wear it; for her life had been mapped out on far different lines from that of her first visit, when she had been merely travelling with her well-to-do parents.

She reflected a moment—how they would all stare when she went up to dinner—the ill-bred women, the boorish men; but she would bear it all "for Eric's sake."

She dressed, plucked up her courage in both hands—and went in to dinner. Her over-wrought nerves fancied she heard the front door open as she turned the top corner of the flight that led to the dining-room.

She took her place amid a flutter of mixed feelings that no one seemed to take any pains to disguise, and struggled with the heavy meat meal in which there was none of the simple dainty refinement she had been accustomed to at the home table. She felt restless, nervous and ill at ease in a way she could hardly account for by her distress of the morning.

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As soon as possible she hurried back to her room, and in a fever of anxious expectation paced to and fro on the cold floor-cloth which covered it.

A hurried slam of the door—no bell—no, the key was in—he would not wait—and Eric Blandford stood in the doorway, his face blanched with an indefinite fear of he knew not what, staring in amazement at his wife.

"You here, Meg?" he panted.

She ran to him, laying a little white hand on each outstretched arm.

"Here? why yes, dear, where else should I be?"

"Oh, nowhere, of course; forgive me, Meg, I was a fool; but I came in an hour since, and you were not here—and I thought—oh, never mind! it was very foolish what I thought; but you seemed so miserable this morning—I thought, Meg—I—thought you had run away—gone."

The last word was almost inaudible, and ended with a little cry that would have been hysteria in a woman. The man was worn out in nerve and mind and brain, and this had been as he thought the last straw.

She nestled her head in under his arm in a winning, bird-like little way she had, and drew down his head to kiss him. He picked her up in his arms like a child and carried her to the basket lounge that stood in the window recess.

With the tact and sympathetic nature of a strong man he asked no questions, only held her there in all the strength of his manhood's love till she had sobbed her tired, rebellious heart out. For she was tired—tired of fighting that strong conviction that told her she had married the best man in all the world.

At last she looked up through her tears.

"So you did come home after all to dinner, Eric?"

"Yes, I got Wright to do my work, because you know you said you couldn't go up alone to dinner here again—and I thought I'd find you here in our room—but never mind; only, why this, dear?"

He held her at arm's length.

"Are you going out? You didn't tell me."

"Not unless you take me, Eric. Don't you think, dear" (coaxingly) "that we might be extravagant for once and go to the theatre this evening, it's *Pinafore* this week?"

"And so you put this on" (touching her sleeve gently) "to please me only."

"Isn't that enough excuse for wanting to look pretty, sweetheart," she whispered; "but suppose you get some dinner while I put out your things."

Edna S. Gamble.

"May I have the pleasure of seeing you home?" he bashfully asked.

"Certainly," she graciously replied. "There is a big hill just in front of the house, or, if you prefer it, you can climb a big tree in the cow-field. Go anywhere so that you can get a good view."

"Ah, how have you amused yourself at the art exhibition?"

"Oh very much! I have admired no picture but yours."

"Really?"

"Yes, indeed; because there was so many people standing before the other pictures that I gave my whole attention to yours to save crowding."

HAVE YOU GOT THAT TEN POUND NOTE?

Thirty Ten-Pound Notes Going Begging!

YOU CAN HAVE ONE FOR THE ASKING!

THE latest scheme of *PEARSON'S WEEKLY* is unquestionably one of the most astounding that has yet been placed before the readers of any paper. Broadly speaking, the Editor places you in the position **of getting ten pounds by simply asking for it.**

The idea is this:

Thirty men are wandering about the country, each with a sealed envelope in his pocket. Each envelope is of linen, tough and unbreakable. No one but the Editor knows *exactly* what is in those envelopes, so the contents cannot be forged. Each contains, as a matter of fact, a letter signed by the Editor authorising the first person who asks for it to the sum of £10.

NOW YOU SEE HOW YOU CAN GET £10 FOR ASKING.

We don't expect you to rush out at once and ask every man you meet if he has the envelope. That would be foolish—a mere waste of time. Moreover, you would probably get a rebuff.

What you should do is to quietly watch everyone you come in contact with. If you think the man you see is likely to be one of these men, you can, in an inoffensive and quiet manner, simply say: "By-the-way, have you seen this scheme?" and show him this page. If he is *not* one of the £10 gentlemen he will say he hasn't seen the scheme, and will be interested, and thank you for putting the chance of making £10 in his way. If he is one of the Ten Pounders he will quietly and unostentatiously take out his pocket-book and hand you the sealed letter.

This you will at once post to us in a registered envelope, and **WE WILL SEND YOU A CHEQUE FOR £10.**

THE TEN-POUNDERS

Will travel by the train. Will wear ordinary clothes.
Will stop at all sorts of hotels. Will smoke and drink.
Will attend places of entertainment.
Will look in shop windows.
Will loaf about the beach or parks.

In fact, will behave just like ordinary mortals.

They will wander about our big cities, they will alight from trains at wayside stations, and walk about villages and small towns, and they will altogether give every opportunity to people to get those £10 notes.

If you are at this moment in the train one of these men ***may be opposite you, or sitting next to you!***

Just casually show him this page. If he's one of them you'll get £10.

You will at once say: "Oh, yes, but I might ask a thousand people, and yet not get the right one."

Of course you might; but then, you might ask three, and the third might be the right one. Don't think because you simply move in a limited circle during your day's work that you're not likely to see the right man. All these men will intrude themselves unostentatiously into people's daily lives. They may converse with you on any subjects but those which will give you a hint regarding the ten pounds, unless you broach such subject yourself.

Don't think that you have to ask everyone you meet. Just show the page to a fellow passenger by boat or train, to a chance acquaintance on the beach or on the parade. No harm is done if he's not the right chap. You can both just laugh over it.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN.

The Three Hundred Pounds is wandering about the United Kingdom at this moment. Someone has got to get it. Why not you?

As each £10 has been asked for advertisements will be inserted in the newspapers published in the locality in which the claim has been made.

Every day the Ten Pounders will write to the Editor and tell their experiences—where they had breakfast, where they lunched, whom they sat next to, what those people were like, what they were talking about, and what they ate—in fact, will say just exactly what they have been doing every day. Some of this information will be published in the ***Daily Express*** every day and in ***Pearson's Weekly*** every week, so you will know just how things are going along.

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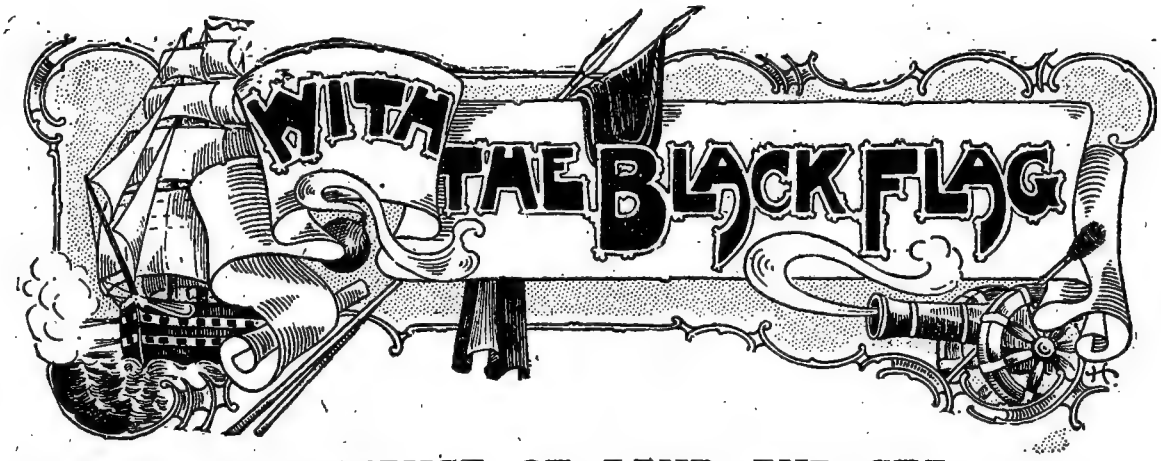

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By William Westall.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

I Start with Dispatches for Bolivar.

The christening performed by an urbane old priest, who fortunately took my orthodoxy for granted, came off as had been arranged, and was followed by a feast at which many guests were present and many toasts drunk. To one of these I was called upon to respond, rather to my dismay, for though I knew Spanish indifferently well, my vocabulary of fine phrases was rather limited, and I had not acquired the art of turning the pretty compliments which the occasion required.

Nevertheless, I did my best, and Pepita was good enough to say that I acquitted myself to admiration. But Pepita was a bit of a wag, if a lady can be a wag, and liked to tease as much as to please.

"Your accent is pure Castilian," quoth she, "and what you said about our darling being born under a lucky star and at a time when the newly-risen sun of liberty is chasing away the last of the black clouds of despotism which have so long darkened this beautiful land, was very nice and very American."

And then she laughed, as well she might, for I had not enough Castilian at my command to say anything so flowery and absurd.

When the time for parting drew near she became more serious, affecting a great interest in my welfare and inquiring whether our expedition was likely to be so dangerous as had been said.

"I can only tell you what I heard. The Vice-President thinks it will be dangerous, and Don Iago is of the same opinion, but I daresay they exaggerate. Besides, dangers are made only to be overcome, and I have no doubt we shall return to Angostura safe and sound," I answered, with somewhat more confidence than I felt.

"I hope you will, Señor Wyvenhoe. It would be terrible if any harm—if you were——" And then, as though the thought were more than she could bear, Pepita covered her face, and added, in a voice broken with emotion, "If you were to fall into the hands of those cruel royalists think how sad it would be for us all, especially for"—here a long pause—"especially for your dear little godson."

On this the fan was turned aside, revealing a merry face and a pair of mischievous black eyes.

"And would be sad for nobody else?" I asked, laughing at my own discomfiture, for I had been foolish enough to think her emotion real.

"*Si*, señor, for us all. Luisa and I would be very sorry—really. So take care you come back safe and sound and bring Don Iago with you."

And I thought that they might be sorry—for a few minutes. The christening party was the last dissipation in which my compadre and myself indulged before our departure. We had to prepare for the sterner work before us, and there was much to do and several important questions to consider. The first related to the sort of craft we were to take.

Arismendez offered us either a launch or one or more flecheras, as we might prefer. Launches are large, clumsy boats, with a single mast and a big sail, and a caroza or awning in the stern sheets; flecheras, as distinguished from war flecheras, long canoes, cut out very light and paddled by twelve or more Indians, and are as swift as their name "arrow boats" implies.

Their greatest fault is the scantiness of their passenger accommodation, which is limited to a low, narrow cabin wherein there is barely room for two persons. Yet, flecheras being independent of the wind and faster than launches, we did not hesitate in our choice.

"You take flecheras," said the skipper, and we took his advice.

The next question was how many. A large expedition might attract attention and so invite attack, a single boat would be unable to withstand the river pirates, who at that time infested certain parts of the Orinoco, so we asked the General for two flecheras, and as Indians, though the best boatmen, are not warlike, we found ten Zambos who agreed to paddle on condition of having a hand in all the fighting and plundering that might come in our way. It was also arranged to take with us a young fellow of the name of Bonanza, known both to Arismendez and Santleo, but he had nothing to do with the dispatches and did not take the oath.

Our weapons were four double-barrelled guns, one barrel rifled the other smooth, twice as many pistols for ourselves and a dozen muskets for the Zambos, and all carried machetes, long broad-bladed, wooden-handled knives, equally adapted for cutting through bush and cutting down enemies.

So our fighting strength consisted of fourteen well-armed men, enough, as we were assured, to enable us to defy all

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the ordinary perils of the water. As for those of the land we should have to trust more to strategy and good fortune than to numbers or strength.

When all was ready we received the dispatches and took the oath, which was to the effect that we would neither deliver them nor divulge their contents to any other person than Don Simon Bolivar, the Supreme Chief, that if we were in danger of capture by the enemy and unable to escape we would effectually destroy all the papers placed in our charge; also, that no torture, fear of torture or of death should induce us to betray to the enemy any knowledge we might possess of their nature or of the condition of the Republic, which was both portentous and comprehensive, and a grim incident that happened on the same day emphasised its significance.

A courier had arrived from the army without his dispatches, of which he had been deprived by the Spaniards. It had been impossible, as he averred, to destroy them. After hearing his report and asking him a few questions, Arismendez ordered the poor devil to be straightway hanged, and when we left Angostura his body was swinging from a gibbet.

It was a cruel and, as I thought, an impolitic deed. The man might have been surprised or taken prisoner in circumstances which rendered the destruction of his dispatches impossible, and had he deserted or said that after destroying them he had escaped, when escape seemed impossible, he would have saved his life instead of being punished for telling the truth.

Santleo agreed with me.

"The General is too much given to killing people," he said. "They all are. It is a warning to us. If we are surprised with our dispatches, which the saints forbid, we won't return to Angostura, *mio amigo*. We have not sworn to do that."

"Do the Spaniards ever torture prisoners?"

"I believe so, and they say that Morillo sometimes does it out of pure devilry, not merely to extort confession."

"And the patriots?"

"I never heard of any of our generals sanctioning the torture of prisoners, though I should not be surprised if some of the baser of them did. Spaniards were always cruel. We have all some Spanish blood in our veins, and an admixture of Indian or negro does not improve the strain."

"Some Spanish blood! Why, I thought you were of the blue blood?"

"You are mistaken."

"But there is nothing of the Indian or negro about you," quoth I, glancing at Santleo's red-brown hair and blue eyes.

"No, sir," he returned proudly and emphatically. "I thank Heaven that the mixture in my blood is of the noblest on earth. It is agreed that we start to-morrow at daybreak, is it not? It should be earlier, only I think several of our friends who don't rise before the sun have expressed a desire to see us off."

"*Bueno!* It is agreed," I replied, and so the talk ended, Don Iago being obviously indisposed to say aught more about himself, which was provoking, the little he had said having whetted the curiosity which Pepita's account of him had excited.

The friends who came to see us off were Señor Calzada, with his two fair daughters, and a few others, including of course the skipper, who if he felt as unhappy as I did must have been rather miserable, for we had become warmly attached to each other, and I was loth to lose him, yet we tried to put a good face on it and were both outwardly cheerful.

"I wish I were going with you. You will see more than I shall," he said as we walked down to the quay.

"But I shall not see Mrs. Barnish. It would take a good deal of Venezuela to compensate you for missing her."

"You are right. I would not swap her for the whole country, with its alligators, mosquitoes, centipedes, and snakes thrown in. You may laugh, Wyvenhoe, but your turn will come."

"It has come—and gone, thank goodness. I may marry sometime as a matter of duty, but I don't think the woman exists whom I could like as well as I like you, dear friend."

We found Santleo and Bonanza at the river side, and were presently joined by the Cazadas. Luisa looked unhappy, and had hard work to control her voice and restrain her tears. Pepita was unusually quiet and subdued.

"Do take care of yourself and don't run into unnecessary danger," she whispered. "We shall all look anxiously for your news."

I observed that Don Iago and Luisa were also having a few words apart.

After being embraced by Señor Cazada and several other caballeros and shaking hands with Cautley, we went on board the flecheras, the moorings were cast loose, the patrons (pilots) gave the word: "*Vaya con Dios*" (Forward in God's name), and we sailed away, followed by a chorus of *adios* and the skipper's hearty "Good luck and a pleasant journey."

Santleo and I had to sit as close together as two "insides" in a narrow coach, our shelter being a sort of open tent in which we could neither lie down nor stretch our legs.

"Luisa and Pepita are nice girls, and I have known Luisa longer than you have known Pepita," said Don Iago, suppressing a sigh.

"You are sorry to leave her?"

"Yes, and I think she was sorry to be left, poor girl

We sailed away, followed by a chorus of *adios*.

She and her people have been very kind. They made me feel at home, and partings always remind me of——"

And then, without completing the sentence, he sighed again and relapsed into silence, and I, being also in a melancholy mood, made no attempt to keep up the con-

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versation, though I should have liked to know of what it was that partings always reminded my compadre.

The Indians rowed well, handling their paddles with great dexterity and keeping the canoe near the right bank where the current was less powerful than in the middle of the river, and the wind presently getting up a small square sail was hoisted on the short mast, which proved a great help. The crew of our flechera numbered twenty-four, exclusive of the patron, of whom sixteen paddled, two abreast, while the remainder rested, and when their turn came relieved as many of their comrades. The other boat being smaller had fewer men, nineteen all told.

Now and then, by way of variety, we changed places, Bonanza joining Santleo and myself John Ready, or *vice versâ*. Above Angostura the river scenery is of a different character from that lower down. The country is higher and for the most part less densely wooded, and in many parts quite open, affording views of well-watered savannahs thronged with innumerable herds of wild horses and cattle, and groups of small islands, shaded with trees and covered with luxuriant vegetation, stretched from shore to shore.

But the patrons always give overhanging trees a wide berth; snakes lurk in the branches, basking and flashing their brilliant colours in the sun, and though the greater part were probably harmless, the dreaded cascabel (rattlesnake) was generally among them, and a few of these dropping into the boat would have caused trouble.

And so we fared all day, the Indians neither stopping nor slackening, even during the hottest hours, and when evening came we landed on a sand bank, which seemed a convenient place for passing the night. Wood was gathered, a fire kindled, and coffee made. We had brought with us a supply of *tasajo* (jerked beef) and biscuits, and the Indians found in the sand several nests of turtle eggs, which make excellent eating, and formed a toothsome addition to our repast.

Bonanza fetched his guitar and sang some old Spanish songs of love and war.

After supper Bonanza fetched his guitar and sang some old Spanish songs of love and war, then several *chansons du pays*, chanted in a wild recitative, the Indians joining in the chorus, so that we had quite a musical evening.

A gay dare-devil caballero was Antonio Bonanza, with a dark skin, a handsome face and gipsy-like eyes, full of quips and cranks, spirits that nothing could damp, and an incessant talker.

When the singing and the talk round the fire were over we rolled ourselves in our cobijas and lay down on the sand, which made an easy bed, but the mosquitoes made sleep impossible; we could only turn and groan, and turn again, and as a last resort creep to the lee side of the fire whereon the men had heaped green wood, though, owing to the pungency of the smoke, the remedy was almost as bad as the disease, and we rose at daybreak weary and unrefreshed. Then, after a breakfast of coffee, plantains and biscuits, and a plunge in the river, we continued our journey.

The next day and the next, and the day after that were merely repetitions of the first. The scenery was always fine, the animal life always abundant and wonderful, but the constrained position we were compelled to adopt by day and the mosquitoes by night took the edge off our enjoyment. Of human life we saw little. Nearly every village we passed had been burnt by the royalists and deserted by its inhabitants, save, perhaps, a few squalid women and wandering Indians.

Now and then we landed to stretch our legs and replenish our larder with our guns, but we never ventured far from the boats, for we had been warned that the country, as well as the river, was infested by robbers, and that the Indians were not to be trusted, except to betray us to the enemy—foreign or native—there being still Venezuelans who had not renounced their allegiance to Spain.

About halfway between Angostura and Caycara we came to a pass known as La Boca del Inferno (Hell's Mouth), the most remarkable and impressive part of the Orinoco I had yet seen. The river first narrows, then widens out, then narrows again, forming a vast and beautiful pool in which hundreds of alligators, porpoises, manatees and water-hogs, and millions of fish disport themselves.

Higher up is the Boca, a point where the main body of the mighty stream is forced between two immense pillars of rock and hurled into the pool like a hurricane. Even the largest trees are sucked under as soon as they enter this strait, not to reappear until they have passed the pool.

At the first view of that portentous flood of urgent water, lashing against the rocks up which it leaps in tongues of foam, whirling its spray high in the air, rushing wildly between its confines, I thought we had come to the end of our journey, that further we could not go. But thanks to the courage and dexterity of our boatmen we won through, sometimes warping, sometimes rowing, after a long and hard struggle, and presently finding a suitable spot for a bivouac rewarded them with a good supper washed down with a double allowance of aguardiente.

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"How about the robbers and pirates who, as it is said, infest these parts? Are there any?" I asked Don Antonio as we sat by the fire.

"At any rate they seem to be rather scarce. We see none," quoth he.

"Wait a bit, there is plenty of time, and river pirates no more show their colours than land robbers announce their coming," said Santleo laughing. "We may have seen both without knowing it. I did not like the looks of that big launch we passed just before entering the narrows."

"What was there wrong with the launch?"

"With the boat itself—nothing; it was the crew I was thinking of. There were too many of them, several armed. However, we have nothing to fear from her; she is going down stream and the rapids are between us."

"Fear! We have nothing to fear from any of them armed as we are," exclaimed Bonanza.

"That depends on circumstances. You are spoiling for a fight, I think, Don Antonio," said Santleo smiling.

"Well, I should not object to a brush with the rascals, just to keep our hands in."

"I should, and so I think would Señor Wyvenhoe. We have our dispatches to think of, and there is neither glory nor aught else to be gained by an encounter with pirates. However, as their aim is plunder and they don't like hard knocks they are not likely to trouble us unless we grow careless and let them take us at a disadvantage."

I don't think we grew more careless as touching pirates, for we always set a watch at night, and whenever we met a large launch or several canoes in company kept them at arm's length and looked to our weapons, for we had heard it was the pirates' way to give friendly greeting, ask for news, or, pretending to be traders, offer something for sale, and so take their victims unawares.

But we went oftener ashore to stretch our legs than we had done, and bought plantains and tazajo from the Indians, which, seeing that some of them were supposed to be in league with the robbers, was perhaps not very prudent. But immunity always did make for indifference and always will.

One day we found a village which had escaped destruction and were cordially welcomed by the alcalde, a polite, fair-seeming old gentleman, who assured us that no royalist troops or robbers had been seen in the neighbourhood for a long time, and offered us quarters for the night, of course for a consideration.

It had perhaps been wiser to refuse, but the temptation of a quiet night in comfortable beds was irresistible, and after a good supper we turned in and slept the sleep of the just, for though the patio where our cots were placed was not free from mosquitoes, they were of a much less blood-thirsty sort than those nearer to the river, and did not disturb us.

The alcalde, who averred himself an ardent patriot, though very courteous was also very curious, asking with some persistence questions which it did not suit us to answer. He knew we hailed from Angostura, we could hardly hail from anywhere else, and it was obvious from his manner and his remarks that he had a shrewd suspicion we carried dispatches and were going to the front.

When morning came he first invited, then urged us to prolong our stay

"You had better," he said as a final argument. "*El rio es malo*" (the river is bad).

"How so?" I asked him. "The river was good enough when we left it, and the weather has not changed for the worse."

On which the old gentleman wagged his head portentously, looked preternaturally solemn, and drew his thumb across his throat with a significance there was no mistaking.

Don Iago laughed.

"You mean we may have our throats cut," he said. "You need have no apprehension on that score. We can take care of ourselves, and those who interfere with us are more likely to get their throats cut than to cut ours. *Vamonos, amigos. Adios*, Señor Alcalde."

"*Adios*, señores," he answered surlily. "All the same, *el rio es malo*, and you will regret not having heeded my warning."

"I distrust that old fellow," said I when we were under weigh.

"So do I for several reasons, one of which has only occurred to me a few minutes since. If I had thought of it last night, as I ought to have done, I should have been against accepting his hospitality," returned Santleo.

"And what is that?"

"The fact of his being there and the village not having been destroyed. Royalist troops were undoubtedly hereabouts not many months ago, and if the alcalde had not made himself useful to them they would have burnt the place down about his ears. As likely as not he is a royalist at heart, and gave us quarters only to find out who we are."

"But what could be his motive for pressing us to prolong our stay?"

"Suppose he is in league with the pirates and had con-

All the muskets and rifles went off, doing dire damage among the pirates.

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trived a nice little scheme for surprising the flecheras while we were fooling round here? Or suppose there is a detachment of Spaniards not more than seven or eight leagues off, that he has sent an Indian scout with word that there are three rebel officers in the village whom he has reason to believe are carrying dispatches to Bolivar?"

"He would want to keep us here until they came?"

"Just so."

"*Por Dios!* Let us go back and give the old traitor his deserts," exclaimed Bonanza.

"I could not consent to that. It would be murder and of no earthly use. The best thing we can do is to hurry to the boats and get away quickly," said I. "Is not that your opinion, Don Iago?"

"Of course, and the more quickly the better. Double quick march!"

On this we went on at a run, though it was warm work, and were greatly relieved to see the flecheras lying in the cove where we had left them. After what had happened I should not have been surprised to find them either plundered or gone.

So soon as we were out of the cove and away from the trees sail was made, the wind being fair, and we went on our way, if not exactly rejoicing yet feeling devoutly thankful that we had come off so well. At any rate, it was my feeling, and I know it was my compadre's.

Had the alcalde got a few men together and fallen on us while we slept he might have taken both us and our dispatches; but for so bold a course he probably lacked both the resolution and the means, or as we had arms he may have feared for his skin. Treachery was more in his line, and from what subsequently came to pass I have not the least doubt that had we tarried an hour or two longer the boat would have been captured, and we should have had to fight for our lives, with scant hopes of saving them.

Two hours after leaving the cove, though owing to the winding of the river we had not gone far as the crow flies, four men in a canoe half-a-mile ahead were observed paddling about as if they were on the look out for something, and they no sooner saw us than they disappeared, which in the light of our recent experience struck both Santleo and myself as suspicious, and the flecheras were ordered to keep further out.

Soon afterwards two flecheras full of men and two canoes shot out into the river, no doubt from the creek into which the small canoe had disappeared.

This was more suspicious still, and though it by no means followed that they meant to molest us we made ready for action, opened the ammunition boxes, loaded our rifles and pistols, and the Zambos were ordered to load their muskets, all of which was done with as little movement as possible so as not to attract the attention of our possible enemies, who, after going halfway across the river, had headed up stream and were almost abreast with ourselves.

"I think they mean mischief," said Don Iago; "but if they are pirates and what I have heard of their ways be true they won't bear up and engage like men, but pretend to be friendly and try to take us unawares."

"And if they do?"

"What say you?"

"Don't give 'em a chance—fire first."

"So say I."

"If we are sure their intentions are hostile."

"Sure we cannot be; we can only judge by their ways, and it were madness to throw away a chance. However, as we are not to fight unless it cannot be avoided let us try to give them the go by. That will show whether they mean honestly."

The idea was a good one, and the crews of the two flecheras were ordered to increase their speed gradually. The strange flecheras followed suit, paddling in a style which showed that we had no chance of outpacing them. On this our fellows went slower, but slow or fast the strangers kept abreast of us, as yet, however, out of speaking distance.

"You see," remarked Santleo significantly.

The Zambos were now ordered to prime their muskets and lie down in the bottom of the boats, and we put our pistols in our belts and laid out pieces and swords within arm's length. The second boat with Bonanza and Ready on board

We were still talking when an Indian came up at a run, breathless and panting.

was close by on our right and between us and the left bank of the river.

Meanwhile the strangers were edging towards us, but we kept steadily on our course as if we neither feared nor suspected them. Presently one of the flecheras drew nearer, leaving the other and the canoes a few hundred yards in the rear, probably in order not to alarm us.

"*Buenas dias amigos!*" (Good day, friends!) sang out a man in the bow of the leading flechera, at the same time holding up a bunch of plantains and a basket of cassava-bread as though he wanted to trade, but the flash of machete blades and the gleam of gun-barrels belied his friendly overtures.

"Bear to the left," I said to the pilot, and then to the Zambos: "Fire!"

On which all the muskets and rifles went off, doing dire execution among the pirates, who immediately replied, killing one of our Indians and wounding several, but our volley caused so much confusion and disabled so many of their rowers that the enemy's boat, left for a minute to herself, swung round with her prow to the stream.

"*Vaya con Dios!* Row for your lives, men!" cried Don Antonio, and without more ado drove right into the pirate flechera, turning her over like a log.

It was a brave deed and well timed, for the second

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flechera had just come within range, but we had done enough for safety, and leaving her to pick up the people who were struggling in the water we went ahead followed by a few musket shots and a flight of arrows from the canoes, which hurt nobody.

When Santleo and I had done what we could for the wounded I ordered the dead man to be thrown overboard, on which the Indians howled like Irishmen at a wake, and the patron told us that it was a part of their religious belief that the body of an Indian cast into the river became a voracious alligator and avenged himself for the indignity by preying on mankind. He said also that unless we would let them bury their departed comrade in their own way they would stop rowing and desert at the first opportunity.

We consented naturally, and when, three or four hours later, we came to a likely looking place, ran into a small creek and made fast to the side. The body was then put into a hammock, which was slung on a pole and carried by two Indians, who were occasionally relieved.

Santleo, Bonanza, and myself followed the funeral procession, leaving Ready in charge of the boats, only the patron and about a dozen of the Indians going with us.

After walking nearly an hour we came to a glade, which the Indians thought suitable for their purpose. Leaving them to prepare a grave and celebrate the funeral obsequies untroubled by our presence, we went off in pursuit of game, following a track made by cattle and deer through the brushwood, and taking with us a Zambo to carry whatever we might shoot.

Don Antonio, elated by our praises of his gallantry, was in unusually high spirits, chattering almost incessantly, and had just broken into a song when without a word of explanation he darted off like a deer and the next moment disappeared at a turn in the path.

"What a harum-scarum fellow he is," I remarked, laughing.

"No doubt of that. All the same he is as brave as a lion and as sharp as a hawk. What has he seen, I wonder? A petticoat, perhaps."

"I daresay. He is a great admirer of the sex. However, we shall soon know. He won't go far."

We were still talking when an Indian came up at a run, breathless and panting.

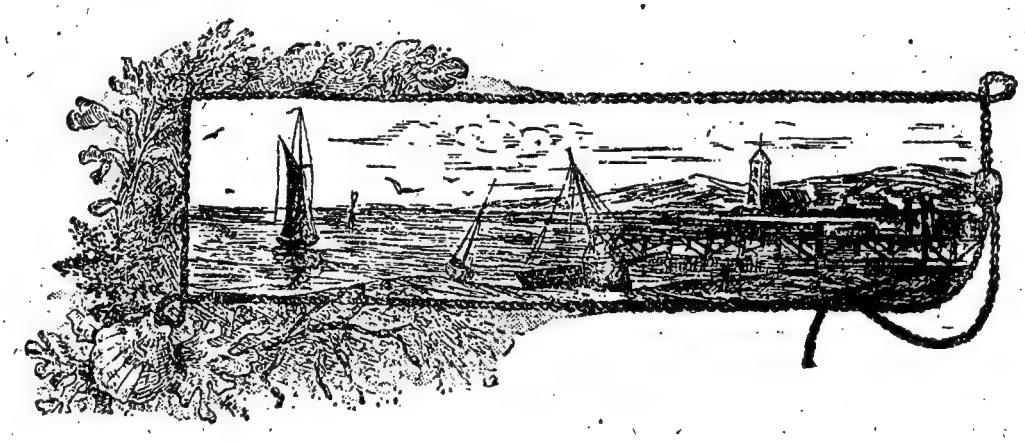
"Soldiers! soldiers!" he gasped, trembling like a leaf.

We thought the man was mad, but when he had recovered his wind and pulled himself together he said that having seen several lancers through the trees he had run on to warn us, and as he was evidently in earnest and could have no interest in deceiving us we were constrained to believe him.

Had Don Antonio been with us we should have hurried back to the boats at best speed, but as leaving him was out of the question we primed our pistols and cocked our guns, and going cautiously forward presently perceived our friend leading a troop horse which bore on its back a lancer, his head, which was bleeding profusely, hanging on one side, his heels on the other, and apparently lifeless.

Bonanza's usually bright face showed great concern; he looked continually about him, his eyes were never still. When we met he whispered, glancing backward: "As you value your lives no noise." Then he led the horse into a side path, beckoning to us to follow him.

(To be continued.)



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SHORT STORIES ABOUT LANDLADIES.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "An American Emperor," by Louis Tracy, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. E. M. Wood, of 28 Croydon Road, Bournbrook, Birmingham. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about CATCH PHRASES (such as "THERE'S 'AIR") and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, September 10. Post-cards only, please.

Smart Woman That.

A LADY on the look-out for lodgings knocked at the door of a house where the notice, "Apartments" was shown.

"Come in," said the refined landlady, who answered the door in her walking out costume. "I have not been accustomed to letting," she said, as her visitor sat down. "My father was in a good position, and kept a coachman."

"Indeed," said the lady, "I wanted a bedroom and share of sitting-room."

"This is my sitting-room, and I didn't think I should have to give it up," said the landlady, "still, between one lady and another lady——"

"How much?" began the visitor.

"It is hard to go into these details," furtively wiping her eyes. "You may think it strange, a reduced lady——"

"Oh, I am sure you are, I should give as little trouble as possible, a tea, dinner——"

"This is my father's likeness," said the landlady briskly. "He was a perfect gentleman. A lady——"

At this moment a man entered with a heavy tread. It was a policeman.

"Sorry to disturb you, ladies, but I have a warrant here for the landlady on a charge of abstracting a £5 note from the desk of her late lodger, Mr. Sharpnose."

"Oh, and I have nearly taken her apartments," said the true landlady, pointing to her visitor. "This is terrible, and I thought her a real lady."

And in spite of protestations the innocent visitor was hustled off to the police station, where she had some trouble in making them see the mistake they had made. Meantime the "lady" landlady had time to clear off.

E. M. W.

Why She Wanted Him Saved.

THE other day a party from Yorkshire were on a boating excursion, and by some accident suddenly upset, to the great distress of the people on shore.

One old lady outdid all the others in her entreaties to save "the young man with the red hair."

Her appeal was heeded, and the young man was saved.

The onlookers congratulated the old lady on the rescue of her son, but she exclaimed that he was not her son.

"Your nephew, then?"

"No, he ain't no relation of mine, but he owes me 7s. 6d. for board and lodgings."

S. C.

Looking Ahead.

A LANDLADY, keeping a large lodging-house near Dublin, was surprised the other day when the servant came and told her that a man had called and asked permission to look over the establishment.

Thinking he wanted lodgings she made no objection, although naturally she thought it a strange request, and before he left she asked him why he wanted to make such a close examination of the premises.

On this he naïvely explained that they had had a meeting in the village and drawn lots for the various properties in the neighbourhood which they were to have when the Socialists were in power.

He had drawn her house, and he wanted to inspect his lot.

W. L.

Mr. Bowser and the Landlady.

IN order to deaden his disappointment at the failure of his farm-house scheme, and also as a kind of solatium to his wife and the cook, Mr. Bowser decided that they should spend a few days by the sea, and accordingly they visited the popular seaside town of Fleece-'em-all, and put up at a lodging-house kept by a very voluble female, who described herself as a "pore, hard-working, struggling widow."

For a time, to wax poetical, "all went merry as a marriage bell," but it was not destined to last, for the fates, with their usual perversity, had decreed that Mr. Bowser's feelings should once more receive a rude shock.

In an evil moment he asked for his bill, which was handed to him with commendable promptness.

And such a bill! It was enough to "stagger humanity," and Mr. Bowser reeled and sank into a state of utter collapse beneath its overpowering influence.

In the course of a few minutes he had recovered sufficiently to ring for the landlady, and when she appeared he received her with a torrent of expletives and wound up as follows:

"Madam, I was under the impression that by staying here we were assisting a poor struggling woman, instead of which I find that we have been intrusting ourselves to the rapacities of a human pelican."

"What, me a pelican?" screamed the landlady.

"Yes, you," replied Mr. Bowser, "for nothing but a pelican could show such a monstrous bill!"

A. V.

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How He Got Warm.

In Cambuslang, Glasgow, lives a landlady noted for the small fires supplied to her lodgers. The house is situate near a large ironworks, which belches forth large tongues of fire.

One winter evening she was much surprised on entering one of the rooms to find the occupant with the window raised and he was sitting with his feet hanging outside.

Visions of suicide rose vividly before her, so she said in her most motherly pay-the-bill tone of voice:

"Don't you think you would be better in bed?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I was just warming my feet in front of the ironworks before I go."

C. V. W.

"Settled" in Threepenny Bits.

I am a curate; a proverbially pale, not young, but poor curate. Until quite recently I was in lodgings, and being, although a curate, honest, it was my wont to settle with my landlady every Monday morning.

One Monday I was paying her as usual, and with the money I gave her were two threepenny bits.

"Ah, sir!" playfully said my landlady, "you curates are all the same; you knows how to find 'em. Why, the last gentleman who was with me—a curate gentleman as well, sir—'e used to settle with me every month, sir, and every time 'e used to pay me in threepenny bits!"

T. A. W.

The Lodgers' Revenge.

Two young friends, on finishing their apprenticeship as printers, secured situations and lodgings in a Lancashire town. They purchased their own provisions, and every Saturday they bought a certain quantity of flour, which their landlady converted into "home-made" bread for them.

But as time went on, their loaves gradually diminished in size and weight, until, at length, the painful fact that that good lady was appropriating their flour forced itself upon them. They thereupon resolved on revenge.

It was their usual custom to dine on Sundays at their landlady's table. On that day a large meat pie formed the principal item of their menu; so on the very next Saturday after their discovery, they purchased a few pounds less of flour, buying instead a quantity of plaster of Paris to compensate for the deficient weight.

The flour and the plaster of Paris they carefully mixed, and awaited the result.

Sunday arrived, and, as usual, at the dinner the pie, which had been baked early in the day so that it might be "nice and cold," was prominent. Grace having been said the good lady commenced operations on the pie, but to her astonishment, try as she liked, she could not cut its crust, the knife slipping as from the back of a turtle.

Amused at the woman's efforts, the young men lost control of themselves and laughed loudly.

"What have you got to laugh at?" cried the perspiring dame.

"Oh, at nothing particular," was the reply, "only take our advice, and make certain that when you go to our flour-bag, that you don't help yourself from the one in which we keep plaster of Paris!"

J. M.

Done!

In a Northern temperance hotel, a party of visitors were making merry one evening in one of the upper bedrooms, after having provided themselves with a supply of the best "mountain dew."

The worthies, however, had a fancy for whisky hot, but the difficulty was to get the hot water without causing any suspicion as to its intended purpose. Finally, by the aid of "palm oil" (in the shape of a shilling), the boots was induced to bring up a large jug of hot water "for shaving."

But Nemesis awaited the drinkers. As the boots was ascending the stairs with the hot water, the proprietress (a very prim and strict old lady) met him, and inquired his destination.

"It's hot water for shaving for twenty-two, ma'am."

"For shaving at half-past nine at night; never!"

"Well, ma'am, that's what the gentleman says."

"All right, then, wait a minute."

The landlady opened the nearest bedroom door, entered, and picked up some soap. Returning to the boots she threw the soap into the hot water, with the remark:

"If the gentleman wants it for shaving he can't object to the soap; so take it up now."

E. H.

The Boarder at Breakfast.

"I have been reading a very interesting article on coffee," said Mrs. Smith, as Mr. Hunker passed up his cup for refilling.

"Being about a beverage, the article couldn't be dry," observed Mr. Hunker playfully, and then added: "Three lumps of sugar, please."

Something like a frown passed over the landlady's face at the boarder's remark, but she continued:

"The article was one which deserves a large circulation, I think, for the good of the race. It was on the injurious effects of coffee drinking. The author said we are becoming a nation of coffee topers. The pernicious effects of too much coffee drinking he set forth in an exceedingly strong light. Among the serious results likely to follow, he enumerates a sallow skin, shattered power, and in some cases he thought consumption might be traced to the inordinate use of the beverage. The author said that appalling statistics could be produced of the ravages of the coffee-drinking habit among the English people."

"It was coffee he was talking about, was it?" asked Mr. Hunker, as he rose to go.

"It was, Mr. Hunker."

"Then I don't think we need worry ourselves."

O. P. W.

Next Friday

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"The Curiosity Shop."

Remember that name, please, when you ask for it next Friday—"The Curiosity Shop."

ORDER IT TO-DAY.

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CLEOPATRA'S ASP.

ACTORS accustomed only to the short journeys and civilised surroundings which are connected with a tour through the English provinces, can have little notion of what it is to be "on the road" in the Western States of America. It is not only that the country and the people are less civilised, but both are so different. Side by side with the strongest marks of primitive habitation you find instances of the latest invention.

The Pullman car startles the antelope and the prairie dog in its passage; advertisements of Mustang Liniment are daubed upon immemorial cliffs; and every little township of wooden houses has its church, its newspaper, and its Lyceum.

It was in the latter building (which for the benefit of the uninitiated I may explain, serves much the same purposes as an English town hall) that the travelling company that I had arranged to join at Kansas city, in the spring of 188—, usually gave its performances. It is surprising, I may remark in passing, how advanced the Americans of the West rn "cities" are in the arrangement of these local theatres. In most of them some decent stock scenery may be found; and the rooms are nearly always clean, and the general arrangement most systematic.

The company I was about to join was one of those struggling combinations of which there are so many travelling the States. Upon the basis of a small amount of capital and a large stock of histrionic enthusiasm, the "leading man" of the company, who was also the manager, had "organised" the troupe for the exposition to the benighted denizens of the Far West of the beauties of the legitimate drama in general, and of his own acting in particular.

His wife was a little woman from Florida, and the darkness of her complexion and a certain blueness of the tinge of her finger-nails spoke pretty decidedly of an admixture of negro blood in herself or in her ancestors. I found, soon after I joined the company, that she had been tried in Shakesperian leading parts, but had so egregiously failed in them that even to the partial eyes of her spouse the fact was evident that a substitute for her in these *rôles* must be found. The result was an advertisement in a New York theatrical paper, and my acceptance thereof, decided partly by the fact that I had been "resting" for a tediously long period, but more by the opportunity which seemed to be offered to me of gaining experience in the higher walks of the drama.

I found the manager, who rejoiced in the Transatlantically aristocratic name of Calhoun, extremely polite, indeed, perhaps rather too much so, considering that his wife was a member of the company. I must say, however, that this amiability on Mr. Calhoun's part arose much more from histrionic selfishness than from anything approaching to gallantry. Like most enthusiasts, he would have sacrificed anything to improve the effect of his performances; and the fact that in me he found a leading lady, who, whilst competent to sustain the characters allotted to her to the satisfaction of his audiences, was yet sufficiently modest to adopt his views of the proper treatment of a dramatic situation, had. I am sure, more to do with his cordiality than any personal admiration for myself. I need hardly say that the "views" alluded to generally dictated giving a prominence in his own performances and a retiring reserve in mine which was not in every case warranted by the author's text.

As for Mrs. Calhoun (Pepita, as her husband called her—an example we may as well, for the sake of brevity, follow), she showed her dislike for me from the moment we met. It was, perhaps, too much to expect an actress who had made a failure in "leading business," and who had been relegated to the Charmians and Emilias of Shakesperian representations, to welcome with cordiality the individual who came to take her place.

At the same time, I think Pepita might have been a little less demonstrative of her antipathy. When we met in the passages of the various theatres which we visited she swept past after the slightest of nods, turning to me with marked disdain her rounded, though somewhat swarthy shoulders; and whilst I was upon the stage I often caught a glimpse of her standing in the wings, glaring upon me with eyes that shone with the lurid glare of bitter detestation.

I soon discovered that, in addition to her hatred of me as a dramatic rival, Pepita cherished a feeling of jealousy of another kind. Knowing how deeply artistic egotism drowned every other voice in Mr. Calhoun's breast, I was much amused at this ridiculous fancy on her part; and I am much ashamed to say that, to annoy Pepita, I often elaborated the "business" between Mr. Calhoun and myself, especially in scenes of an amorous

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nature. I had, however, to be careful how I did this; for the tragedian, whose mind was entirely occupied with himself and the effect which he was producing upon the audience, was inclined to be uneasy at my thus putting myself forward; and I saw clearly that the day on which I cast him distinctly into the shade would be the day on which I should receive a firm, but courteous "notice."

I will pass over several weeks of experience of this sort, during which I had firmly established myself in the good graces of the various members of the company (with the exception always of the hostile Pepita), and come to the time of our visit to the little city of Selma, in the State of——.

I generally made a point, in the places in which we played, of making the acquaintance of a few of the more respectable of the inhabitants. Manners are much franker and more simple in this particular than with you in England, and a well-conducted young woman in a travelling company is received with hospitality by the unconventional people of the Western townships.

During our stay at Selma I had made the acquaintance of the family of Deacon Clay, which consisted of one strapping girl and three stalwart sons, all about (or over) six feet in height.

The eldest and most stalwart of these three was named Saul, and it was he who in the forenoons during the first three days of our stay at Selma showed me the "lions" of the place, the waterfall, the saw-mill, and the "Maiden's Leap"—for Selma, like other places, had its romantic traditions. On the fourth, as I, like Oliver, "asked for more," he proposed to take me on a visit to "Old Leathers." I consented, and on our way to this curious personage's abode he gave me some information about him.

Old Leathers, it appeared, was a harmless lunatic, who lived on odd jobs and the charity of the neighbouring farmers. His particular weakness was a friendship for snakes in general, and rattlesnakes in particular. To avoid the danger of being bitten by these reptiles, he invariably wore a suit of soft leather, boots, jerkin, and all—hence his cognomen.

We started from the town in one of those boxes upon wheels which are dignified in the West by the name of "waggons"; and after a jolting drive of several miles arrived at a glen between two "bluffs." At the top of this Saul fastened the horses, and led me carefully down the narrow path which wound its way to the bottom of the little valley.

It was bestrewn with masses of rock of all sizes and shapes, three or four of which, thrown together by some convulsion of nature, formed a sort of cave between them. Pausing some twenty feet above this, Saul hallooed, and a figure, which I saw at once must be Old Leathers, appeared in answer to the summons, like a demon through a trap in a pantomime.

The old man was eccentrically clad in the suit of leather in which I had been prepared to see him attired, and the skin of a raccoon with the tail hanging gracefully behind, formed a charactistic covering for his grey head. His features were deeply marked with age and a hard frontier life, but had an appearance of haleness and health only seen in those habituated to an open-air existence.

"Here's a young lady come all the way from New York to see you," said Saul, with pardonable exaggeration. Old Leathers took off his cap and bowed with the air of a polished courtier. "Can't you show her your pets?"

"Why, yes," said the old man. "But you must not be frightened," he continued with a genial smile. "It's not every one that fancies 'em. Keep quiet and I will bring them out."

Though considerably nervous, I concealed a cowardice which I felt that Saul would have despised, and was silent, whilst the old man took a flute from his pocket, and began to play one of those "Christy Minstrel" airs which are so popular in the United States.

Then I saw a sight which astonished me. From under each of the numerous blocks of stone which were scattered around came a snake. "Copper-heads," spotted with copper-coloured splotches not only on the head but all over the body; "garter-snakes," grey and yellow-green, were there; but the majority of the audience at Old Leathers' concert belonged to the species designated in natural history books as the "deadly" rattlesnake.

They came forward and curled and wound themselves about Old Leathers' ankles, their heads gliding upwards over his legs, moving as if in caress, and then falling to the ground, rising again to repeat the motion. The quaint figure of the old frontiers-man; the grotesque contrast between the strains of "Mother, I am dying fast," and the general surroundings; the background of the rocky cliffs and irregular rock-strewn grass; and the sight of the ever-moving, silent reptiles, whom my fancy and their constant restless motion multiplied into thrice their number, had a strange effect upon my senses.

Louder and longer sounded the soft notes of the flute; faster and faster coiled and uncoiled themselves the supple bodies of the snakes; till, at last, I felt a sort of mesmeric drowsiness coming over me, and had I gazed at this strange spectacle much longer, I believe, despite my horror of snakes in general, and "rattlers" in particular, I should have left the spot where I was standing and joined in a tarantala dance with Old Leathers' favourites.

But the music ceased, and almost before he had time to put up his instrument every snake had disappeared as suddenly as it had come.

I pressed the old man to take a reward for his exhibition, but he courteously refused.

"If you would like to buy one, miss," he said. "I sell many to menageries, and send some to England." Seeing my horror, he added: "You would not be the first, miss. Only this morning——"

"Oh, no!" I interrupted him in horror.

Thanking him for his courtesy, we departed as we had come, but by what seemed an easier path.

As we climbed it I noticed on the ground a glove. On picking it up I saw it was a woman's, and abstractedly put it into my pocket, and we gained the waggon and drove home as fast as Deacon Clay's two trotters could carry us.

It had been arranged that we should play *Antony and Cleopatra* on that particular evening, by particular desire of the deacon and leading inhabitants of Selma, and I asked Saul to drive quickly that I might be back in time for the "call" at twelve.

On arriving at the hall, I found a warm altercation going on between Mr. Calhoun and his wife. She had formerly attempted the part of Cleopatra, and I believe it was the one in which she was least unsatisfactory.

But I really believe that her strongest objection to my undertaking the *rôle* arose from her distaste for the demonstrations of affection which the great dramatist's

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lines suggest between the amorous Antony and the Egyptian queen.

I was obliged to be a listener to this connubial dispute; and from what I heard I gathered that the conduct of Pepita had of late not been entirely exemplary. She had, it seemed, been "making too free" with a party of "cow-boys" (cattle drovers from Texas) who had honoured Selma with a visit; and it was as much to teach her a lesson as to secure an adequate representation of the part that her husband refused, in not too civil terms, to alter the cast of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Pepita might play Charmian if she chose; otherwise she might "leave it alone."

At this refusal the passionate temper of the *mestizo* flared into flame. She first of all poured out upon the devoted head of her husband a flood of abuse which I need not write down here; and then turning to me, she scolded me soundly for having "supplanted" her, as she called it.

"Yes," she said, her black eyes flashing, her nostrils dilated, and her hand clenched in a style that, if she could only have reproduced it on the stage, would have made her successful as a *tragedienne*, "you have taken my bread out of my mouth, and you have taken my husband; but, mark my word, you won't live to enjoy either!" Then, her eyes falling upon the glove which happened to be protruding from the pocket of my ulster, she cried: "Thief! Would you take everything?" snatched the glove away, and dashed, weeping wildly, out of the place.

I was surprised to discover that it was Pepita's glove which I had picked up, and an uneasy wonder how it came to be left where I had found it hovered, so to speak, at the back of my brains for some hours. But, as these were also occupied with the very harassing work of rehearsing, it was not strange that my "secondary musings" had no definite result.

There was a sort of suppressed hostility in Pepita's manner when we met at the theatre in the evening. She was paler than usual, and more reflective and abstracted. She played Charmian as if in a dream. There was evidently something on, or in her mind which made her manner so unusual. Once, when her husband attempted to enter her dressing-room, she slammed the door in his face, and bolted it on the inside.

The play proceeded, as usual, till we came to the well-known scene of Cleopatra's suicide in the last act. The actor who played the clown was ushered in by Cleopatra's handmaidens, and in answer to my question, "Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there, that kills and hurts not?" delivered the speech set down for him.

While waiting for my cue, I was harassed by a sound for which I could not account. It was a gentle "whirr," like a dry pea rattling in its pod. I tried dreamily to localise this noise; and it is a curious instance of the difficulty of decision in these cases that it was not until I had actually taken the basket into my hand that I found that the sound was caused by something inside it.

The exigencies of the stage leave no time for hesitation. Come what may, the business of a scene must not stop. I took the basket from the clown, and, after speaking the lines which precede the action, raised the lid, and took what I presumed was the usual "property" snake from its interior.

I shall never forget the shudder of repulsion that ran over my body as I felt the clammy, oozing thing which I had grasped. A sort of restriction of the muscles took place which prevented my loosing my hold, even when I saw that it contained a large rattlesnake, which, stirred to a high pitch of anger by its restraint, was drawing back its head, with its neck in exactly the shape of a note of interrogation, its mouth open, and its little eyes sparkling with rage, whilst it agitated its rattle savagely. In another moment it darted its nose against my neck with a force that was startling, and, overcome with sickening horror, I fainted.

* * * * *

When I came to myself I was suffering an intolerably burning pain in my neck. Saul Clay was standing near the sofa in the dressing-room, to which I had been carried after I had fainted.

In a few words of deep feeling he told me that he had witnessed the accident, and, though not able to prevent the snake biting me, had applied the rough, but generally effective, frontier remedy of placing some gunpowder upon the bleeding wound and igniting it.

It was to this readiness of action on his part that I probably owed my life. The snake had escaped in the confusion.

I was brought to the belief that, but for Saul's remedy my fate would have been sealed, by a shocking occurrence which happened the same night.

It appeared that Mrs. Calhoun had determined to leave her husband, and fly with one of the cow-boys I have already alluded to. Late in the night she took the keys of the building from her husband's pocket, and came to the theatre, probably to procure some expensive dresses which were in her room behind the scenes. Whilst groping about for a light she must have trodden upon the snake, which probably dropped through a chink in the stage into her apartment; and when the janitor came in the morning, he found her stiff in death. Some letters in a man's hand, which were discovered in her pocket, explained her plans.

This painful event broke up the company. Learning that I was about to undertake a tedious journey back to New York, the good deacon persuaded me to remain with him till I might be able to hear of another engagement.

I remained; and it was not long before one was offered me. The most perspicacious of my readers will have already foreseen that it came from Saul Clay, and that the part which I was to fill was that of his wife.

I accepted the *rôle*, and he says that I fill it to satisfaction; in fact, "leave nothing to be desired."

A blue mark on my neck, which nothing can erase, is the only memento which I possess of the painful accident which led to our marriage.

Frank Despser.

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THE WOMAN WHO COULDN'T STAND DRAUGHTS.

My wife's aunt felt a draught. She felt it in her feet, which, at the time, were planted on a breadth and a half of our parlour carpet. My wife's aunt is very sensitive to draughts. She was born in a remote corner of Aberdeenshire, where there is an easterly or northerly gale twenty-nine days out of every month, and people have to blanket horses in their stalls after they are fed, to keep the wind from blowing the hay out through their hides. My wife's aunt was brought up in her father's mill, which had neither doors nor windows, but plenty of holes cut for them, and yet the first thing she found to complain of in our parlour was a draught of air.

"This is the draughtiest place that ever I was in," said my wife's aunt. "I don't see, Howard, how you can reconcile it with your conscience to expose your wife to the peril of catching her death o' cold."

"Our health has been excellent hitherto," said I; "but if you think that this draught is a serious danger, I will have it stopped. I am greatly surprised at it, because our landlord vowed that there was a free circulation of air in every room, and my knowledge of his veracity led me to think that we should have to manufacture oxygen for breathing purposes by a chemical process."

"It's blowing half a gale here now," said she, "and it's as much as my life is worth to sit in it. Can't you give me something to put my feet on? The wind blows all along the floor."

I selected a chair which I thought would stand the pressure, and hoisted her feet into it, though I had no idea it would prove injurious to her health. North-easterly snowstorms have been her daily food for years, and a forty-knot breeze is regarded as next door to a calm where she came from. Then our aunt announced that she had traced the draught to the open grate in our parlour.

We had no fire in it, for the rooms are heated by steam on mild days, such as the one in question. So, under my aunt's supervision, I stuffed the chimney full of paper, and how I shall ever get it out again when we want a fire is more than I can tell If I thought the landlord had skipped a payment on his insurance policy I might burn it out, but otherwise I would not risk the chance of making money for him.

It was desperately hard work to plug up the chimney, but it did no good. Auntie was sure that she should blow away. So Maude closed the folding doors behind the "pourteers." She did not tell me that she had done this, and so, when I rushed through the curtains in search of something to drive into the seams round the skirting, I brought up with a sounding bang against the closed doors. I have done that trick four or five hundred times since those curtains were put up, and yet I have not taught my nose to pick out the soft spots on the doors.

After tinkering with the skirting for half-an-hour, and accomplishing nothing but a stiff back, I asked our aunt whether the breeze was moderating. She gave me no encouragement. She had talked so much about draughts by this time, that both Maude and I were able to imagine that we felt the cold breath of the tomb blowing on the back of our necks.

We made some further investigations as to the source of the draught, and had almost decided that it came from the dark and mysterious cavities into which the folding-doors withdrew when our aunt permits them to be open. It is often possible to hear strange and melancholy sounds by listening at that one of the three caverns which leads dimly in the direction of our neighbours. The sounds of pianos get in that way, and why, I asked, should not other deleterious influences invade our dwelling by the same track?

In view of this possibility, we began to plug things into this place and poke them back with a long stick. We used old newspapers, and almost anything, in fact, which we did not want in our flat. The hole appeared to have a capacity about equal to that of the bottomless pit, but our supply of rubbish was good, and our diligence exemplary.

I think that we might still be engaged in trying to fill that cavity if the gentleman who rents the flat next to ours had not come over to inquire what was our object in thrusting ten or a dozen sacks of rubbish, besides two or three pairs of old trousers, into his parlour. He said that the newspapers were out of date, and the clothing did not fit him, and, in short, he begged us to desist.

"I'll tell you where the trouble is," said our aunt at this stage of the game; "your windows don't fit. There are cracks round them big enough to crawl through."

There was undoubtedly some truth in her allegation. Our landlord has built a great many houses, and the parts of them were furnished to him by wholesale. Sometimes he was not so careful as he ought to have been in putting things together. Several of our windows were intended, I believe, for other houses in different parts of the town.

It seemed best to follow our aunt's advice, and get a man to put weather strips on the windows. It will not surprise anybody who knows me to hear that I went into the weather-strip game in the gentle spring instead of in the autumn. I engaged the weather-strip artist to come the next day. By this time the newly-discovered draught had given Maude such a cold that she could not speak above a whisper, and she and poor Carlo took cough medicine every hour.

I superintended the adjustment of the weather-strips. It was necessary to keep the windows open while the work progressed, and in the course of the operation I contracted a chill that will probably never leave me in this world.

Our servant, too, has a cold. She suffers because of her obedience to our orders, which is the last fate I should ever have predicted for her. By keeping the windows closed, according to directions, she raised the temperature of that room to a point which made it necessary for her to go about her work clad in as little as was consistent with her ideas of propriety.

Consequently, whenever she was obliged to go into any other room she felt the difference in temperature to a which was too much even for her iron constitution. So she bought a quart bottle of Irish whiskey and went home to her relations, who welcomed her with an enthusiasm second only to that with which they welcomed the bottle.

But our aunt continued to be quite well, There is no sustaining power like that of happiness, and when she found that the draught which she had invented had laid us all up, her joy was full. It may have been on that account that she did not take cold herself.

PERCY WEEKS.

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A Jolly Good Thrashing.

MANY people are in the habit of assuring their friends that they "enjoy very poor health," not meaning by this assertion to express contentment with their condition, but the contrary. When I, however, tell you that I once had a jolly good thrashing, there is a special intention in every word of the phrase.

The castigation was jolly, because I thoroughly relished every blow as it fell on my body; and it was good, because it saved my life. The circumstances in which I took this very unusual form of gratification were as follows:

I was living at Trimurtigherry, where I had a small cotton-cleaning and pressing factory. The cotton grown from indigenous seed in that district has but a poor staple, and, in fact, is a crop only cultivated on soils which are considered too poor for cereals.

This inferiority of quality naturally deterred shippers from placing orders freely with me; and in the hope of demonstrating to the ryots the advantage of paying more attention to the industry, I procured a variety of seed from America, and formed a small model plantation near my bungalow.

It succeeded very well, and as the balls ripened, I used carefully to gather them myself, in order to keep the different kinds distinct, and to test the yield.

I was engaged one morning in this manner, and was in the act of plucking some pods off a tree, when I felt a sharp bite on my right wrist. At the same instant I saw a snake drop to the ground and writhe rapidly away.

I noticed a bright, yellow line on each side of the upper surface of the reptile's head convergent on the snout, and I feared, only too justly, that I had been bitten by a tic-polonga, the *daboia Russellii*, one of the most common of venomous snakes. If anything were needed to confirm my misgivings, it was supplied by a glance at my injured wrist.

A look was sufficient, and I instantly knew that the wound had been inflicted by a poisonous serpent.

The two fatal marks where the creature's fangs had pierced my skin were only too plainly visible.

"At least my destroyer shall not escape," I thought, and springing forward, I crushed the snake, which proved to be a tic-polonga, under my heel, just as it was reaching a crevice in the earth, where it would have been safe.

Revenge was certainly my primary impulse in killing the reptile, but I had a secondary object, which was to ascertain its age and size, as the consequences attendant on a poisonous snake-bite are materially affected thereby.

The tic-polonga attains a length of fifty inches, and death generally rapidly supervenes on the bite of a full-grown specimen, especially if the wounded part happen to be one of the extremities, such as a finger or toe which can be fairly seized between the animal's jaws. The venom is in that case injected deeply into the flesh, and commingling at once with the blood, is rapidly diffused through the veins and arteries, and reaching the heart, paralyses the action of that organ.

But if the part attacked present a wider surface, so that the epidermis may perhaps only be abraded and the subcuticle remain unpierced, the chances of remedial measures proving efficacious are greatly increased, while the consequences of any wound inflicted by a *daboia* of not more than twenty or twenty-four inches may generally be counteracted.

The degree of danger from snake-bites also depends considerably on several other conditions, such as the health of the patient; whether the snake has recently made a meal or bitten any other; and, finally the time of the day, as in the early morning, when the air is raw and chilly, a snake is languid, and will strike with comparatively little energy, whereas during the heat of the day it is active and generally very fierce.

The circumstances of my case seemed decidedly against me. The tic-polonga I had killed was at least thirty inches long, and its poison glands must consequently have been fully charged at the moment it bit me—it was after nine o'clock, and a very hot day, and the bite on my wrist was deep.

The only point in my favour was that I was in

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excellent health. I knew the awful gravity of my situation, and was aware that unless some remedies were applied immediately, I should certainly be dead in three-quarters of an hour at the longest.

There was no surgeon or apothecary within fifteen miles of my factory, but I fortunately had some knowledge of the proper method of dealing with such cases as my own, having once seen a ryot being treated for snake-bite by the remedies I proposed to apply to myself, only I remembered, with melancholy interest, that the unfortunate Hindoo had died, notwithstanding the unremitting exertions made to save his life.

The treatment for snake-bite is ligature of the limb above the wound, free incision, sucking, cauterisation, bathing the wound with ammonia, and taking ammonia or brandy internally.

Remembering these directions, I rushed into the bungalow and made a very efficient *tourniquet* with a walking-stick and a wet towel, which I passed round my fore-arm, effectually stopping the circulation. I also summoned my boy, Veerapen, to my assistance, and as I had no ammonia in the house, I ordered him to open a bottle of brandy with all speed.

Whilst Veerapen was getting the cognac, I slashed my wrist freely all round the injured part with my pocket-knife, particularly probing the punctures made by the serpent's fangs, and as the blood spurted freely from the wound I sucked it with the vigour and desperation of a man who knows that a delay of only a quarter of a minute in eliminating the virus from his system may seal his doom.

I noticed with horror that my arm was swelling rapidly, and I began to experience a difficulty in respiration, which I knew was a most unfavourable symptom. Some powerful excitant was necessary immediately to counteract the effect of the poison, yet it seemed as though Veerapen would never bring the brandy, and I called wildly to him to come to me.

He ran into the room with a bottle of the precious liquor in his hand, but in his confusion he could not find a corkscrew, and he was too much dazed and terrified by my misfortune to think of the ready expedient of knocking off the neck of the bottle. However, I soon sent it flying, and pouring out half a tumbler of brandy, I drank it at a gulp.

The spirit revived me, and thus nerved to renewed action, I bade Veerapen call the cook to bring some burning sticks from the kitchen.

With one of these glowing firebrands I seared my bleeding and quivering flesh, never flinching under what in ordinary circumstances would have been excruciating agony, but rather cherishing the pain which was a possible means of saving my life. But I feared my case was past all help, for I was sensible that the contractions of my heart were growing very feeble, and respiration became more and more difficult.

I felt the keenest anguish, and I knew that there remained only one final stage, that of falling into a faint before death supervened.

Just as my senses were deserting me, I was able to clutch the bottle of brandy, and once more poured out a large quantity into the glass. With an effort I just managed to quaff the requickening spirit, which acted on my prostrated nerves like a magic draught.

I rallied; and with a fierce determination to live, I braced my senses together for a final struggle with the potent poison which was now coursing like liquid fire through every vein in my body.

The brandy had no intoxicating results, its ordinary

THESE FELLOWS DIDN'T LIE.

"All these fellows can't be telling lies, can they?" said Mr. Mulcahy to himself, laying down the paper he had been reading and seeming to debate the point in his mind.

Yet he knew the world, and how many statements, even from good people, have to be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, he concluded to risk it; and now, he says, he is thankful he did. The story, put short, is this:

Mr. William H. Mulcahy, whom a letter directed to 27 The College, Mitchelstown, co. Cork, Ireland, will always find, was in his younger days passionately fond of hunting, and rarely missed an opportunity of following the hounds. He then resided at Ballinora, Carrick-on-Suir, and regularly hunted with the Tipperaries, the Kilkennies, the Wexford and Kildare, and Lord Waterford's packs.

"Being hardy and robust," he says, "I took small care of myself; I often got drenched to the skin and let my clothes dry on me. To that, and to irregularity in eating, I attribute what came afterwards.

"I began to lose tone and appetite, and food didn't agree with me as it used to. As time wore on I got worse and had to give up hunting.

"Presently I had to live on soup and milk, and my tongue was furred like lichens on a rock in the woods. Then my heart began to act badly. The least effort made it palpitate violently, and when I lay down you could hear it. Many a night, unable to sleep I got up and smoked and read till morning.

"Under this sort of thing my strength went out of me, and my breathing was so bad I couldn't walk fifty yards without resting.

"Once, as I was leaving a shop in Clonmel, I heard a man say, referring to me: 'Ah, well; he is about at the end of his tether.' Yet I have since attended the funerals of many who were there that day. What poor stuff, my friend, some prophecies are made of. Up to that time no medicine or treatment had helped me.

"Then I read about Mother Seigel's Syrup and letters from people who had been cured by it. All these fellows can't be telling lies, I said; I'll have a try of it myself.

"The first bottle set up my nerves like tuning a fiddle. I began to get good sleep. After that I felt hungry, and when I smelt breakfast I wasn't long getting down stairs.

"To cut my story short, I rapidly picked up my weight and strength and have since been healthy and active. No need to assure you and the public of my faith in Mother Seigel's Syrup."

The statement of which the above is a condensation was sworn to by Mr. Mulcahy on January 24th, 1900, at Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, before Mr. Joseph L. F. Fairbrother, a Commissioner for Oaths for the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland; the Commissioner adding that he personally knows the deponent.

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effects being neutralised by the virus in my body. The giant Alcohol had for once to combat with a rival mightier than himself, and my life depended on the issue of the struggle.

Knowing I might at any moment lapse into the fatal comatose state, I hastily gave my instructions to Veerapen and the cook while my mind remained clear. I directed them to hold me by my arms, one on either side, to keep me walking about, and on no account to suffer me to lie down or go to sleep. I explained to Veerapen that my life depended on my being kept awake, and I ordered him to check the fatal drowsiness by thrashing me with my own horsewhip if necessary, and not to spare it.

Veerapen armed himself with the whip as ordered, and he and the cook began marching me up and down the room.

An overwhelming faintness soon came upon me, and I should have gone to sleep as I walked, had not Veerapen then administered a sharp cut across my calves.

The pain stung me into activity, and I turned upon my servant with an amount of fury which caused him to retreat in hot haste. But remembering why the blow was given, I thanked him for it, curbing my passion and telling him to resume his cure of me. I begged him, no matter what my present anger might be, to continue, by the severe means I had placed in his hands, to prevent my falling asleep, as I would handsomely reward him if he saved my life.

I cannot recollect all that passed; but Veerapen told me that I alternately commanded and intreated with tears in my eyes to be allowed to go to sleep if only for a minute, but that the only attention he paid to my threats or intreaties was to lay on all the harder with the whip.

The blows roused me from my state of torpor for a few minutes only at a time, but during these intervals of consciousness I thoroughly relished the cure I was voluntarily undergoing, and experienced a positive pleasure in feeling the stinging cuts showered on my back, arms, and legs by my lusty attendant.

I turned upon my servant with an amount of fury which caused him to retreat.

The struggle for life was protracted, but gradually the pulsations of my heart became more regular, the load which had oppressed my breathing was slowly lifted from my chest, the fatal yearning for sleep rolled away, and I knew the mortal risk was over.

Perhaps Veerapen had a few old scores to pay off—anyhow, he discharged his duty so thoroughly that, by the time I was out of danger, I was black and blue from head to foot, but I bore him no grudge for these striking marks of his fidelity.

I know I consumed a great deal of brandy, but I did not think I had finished as much as six bottles. Veerapen, however, assured me I had not only taken that quantity, but had wished to have more, only he refused to let me have it.

He produced half a dozen "gentlemen-commoners" as vouchers to his assertion, and if he and the cook had not grossly exceeded the limits of sobriety that night, I might have been persuaded that I alone had swallowed a full gallon imperial measure of old cognac. As it was, I formed an opinion that my worthy servitors had been drinking my very good health and speedy recovery, and I did not reprove them for the jollification on such an occasion.

I gave my faithful boy twelve months' pay, and to the cook, six, as a reward for their timely services. I do not think anything could induce me to part with Veerapen, or Veerapen to leave me as long as I remain in the country.

The effects of the poison did not altogether disappear for some time, but manifested themselves at intervals in muscular spasms, which were very painful and accompanied by great depression of spirits. Time, however, cures all things, and I am to-day as sound as though I had never been within an ace of losing my life through the bite of a tic-polonga.

Jas. Hogg.

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WHITE CALICO FREE

Per Post. Superior heavy quality. Remnants, 3 to 4 yards long. 32 inches wide, 2/6 per Dozen yards; yard wide, 3/3 per Dozen yards. Free from "Dressing." Samples Free. Satisfaction Guaranteed.—EMDEN & CO. (F Dept.), *Manufacturers*, Levenshulme, Manchester

Have You Eczema?

or any form of Skin Disease? If you have, do go to your Chemist or Store, or send stamps or P O. for 1/3 to the Antexema Co., 83 Castle Road, London, N.W., for a bottle of "ANTEXEMA." It gives immediate relief directly it is applied, and soon cures even the most obstinate cases. A Booklet on Skin Troubles is enclosed with each bottle.

All orders are sent securely packed, free from observation.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently by taking TRILENE TABLETS (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE CO., Sole Proprietors, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London.

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

DO YOU KNOW

that with every copy of THIS WEEK'S

HOME NOTES

A Paper Pattern of a

CHILD'S OVERALL

is

GIVEN AWAY?

HOME NOTES is the best and daintiest of ladies' weeklies.

Order a copy at once.

ONE PENNY

A MAGNIFICENT COMPLEXION GUARANTEED

By the free use of LILLIE POWDER. It nourishes, heals, soothes, and brings Health and Beauty.

Order it of your Chemist and refuse all substitutes, as they may be injurious.

Three Tints: Blanche Naturelle, and Rachel.

Of all Chemists, Hairdressers, Stores, &c.

THE LILLIE SYNDICATE,

3 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

SEND FOR

DR. EVANS'S (U.S.A.)

Pamphlet on Nervous Diseases of All Kinds. THIS PAMPHLET describes all the symptoms which arise from Diseases of the NERVOUS SYSTEM. It is up-to-date, having been compiled after years of labour and experience in the Treatment of these Maladies. It is complete, practical, and can be readily understood and acted upon. It gives pure and simple advice to Sufferers. Send stamped addressed envelope to GEORGE WRIGHT, ESQ., Colne House, REMBRANDT ROAD, LEE, LONDON, S.E. (*Name this Paper.*)

TOO STOUT

I was for years; by chance I came across a simple home remedy that reduced me from 17st. to 10st. 12lb., and I will willingly send particulars **free** to any sufferer enclosing stamp. Mrs. L. E. FELL, 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

The Only Efficacious Substitute for Cod-liver Oil.

DEVONSHIRE CREAM

(Really Genuine.) In Patent Air-tight Tins. ½-lb., 1/4; 1-lb., 2/4; 2-lb., 4/-, including Tin and Postage.

Mrs. Conyers,

MORCHARD BISHOP, DEVON.

VARICOCELE.

Every man suffering from Varicocele and the allied troubles, should send for treatise, describing their Causes, Symptoms, Results, and Successful and Painless Treatment without surgical operation or the use of cumbersome trusses and electrical appliances. Will be sent sealed, post free, three stamps.

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"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

SALE OVER SIX MILLION BOXES YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

THE

BEST OF ALL BEVERAGES

AND THE

CHEAPEST.

GOOD!

IT'S

MASON'S

Extract of Herbs

8 Gallons Prime Beer for 6d.

Sample Free for 9 Stamps.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.

NEWBALL & MASON,

NOTTINGHAM.

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The Brain Gymnasium

IN these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, SHORT STORIES, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, September 17th, 1900.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A gold-plated pencil-case will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

No. 211.

Form a square word from equivalents of the following: A Boer General, an official in ancient Rome, a town in Lancashire, exalted, belief.

No. 212.

CARP, NUT, BE, ORE.

The letters in these words, put in their proper order, make one word.

No. 213.

A BB C EEEEE F C H IIIII LLL NN OOO RR SSSSS TT WW Y

These letters, when re-arranged, will form a well-known proverb.

No. 214.

My FIRST in Hebrew, represents
A liquid undulation,
And for a thousand things as well,
'Tis an abbreviation.

My NEXT, when double, is a sign
In musical notation,
Which means, to play with lighter touch,
And greater modulation.

My WHOLE you'll find will stand for those
Who form our legislation,
And when reversed, it is the time
Which follows culmination.

No. 215.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Initials and finals give two Shakespearian characters.

1. A jewel.
2. A well-known fairy.
3. A goddess.
4. A fabulous liquor.
5. A boundary.
6. A master-passion.
7. A fertile spot.

No. 216.

One-half of easy, one-third of pantomime, one-ninth of character, two-fifths of generation, and two-fifths of India. These twelve letters, re-arranged, give the name of a town in India.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 187 to 192.

THE first prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Mr. D. G. Jelley, of 3 Cantwell Road, Plumstead, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "Phil of the Heath," by Harold Child, has been sent to each of the following:

F. G. Melville, Totterdown, Bristol.
T. P. Cowling, Plough Road, Rotherhithe.
J. S. Ryan, Abbott's Road, East Ham, E.
A. E. Whiteman, Leigham Court Road, Streatham.
Miss E. Grace, St. George's Place, Knightsbridge.
W. M. Dalziel, Abercromby Street, Glasgow.
Mrs. Bowden, Albert Bridge Road, Battersea.
G. Richardson, Waltham Cross.
L. Short, Park Road, Hampton Hill.
J. G. Usher, Baltinglass, co. Wicklow.

SOLUTIONS OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM COMPETITION.

Nos. 193 to 198.

No. 193. Cod.

No. 194.

16	3	2	13	34
5	10	11	8	34
9	6	7	12	34
4	15	14	1	34
34	34	34	34	34

No. 195.

M
SET
MELON
TOO
N

No. 196.

BOA
OWN
ANDOVER
OZONE
VOTED
ENEMA
REDAN

No. 197. HAMMOCK.

No. 198. These essays are beneath contempt.

SHORT STORIES ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
Double " " "	1 0 0
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Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, Sept. 11th, if intended for the issue on sale Sept. 25th, and dated September 30th. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's Weekly Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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£3,350 IN CASH PRIZES

FINAL CLOSING OF ALL COMPETITIONS.

No further advertisements of any will appear again. If you do not compete now you may lose £100 Cash. The offer will never be repeated.

In the first place make up the best sentence you can out of five words, each word commencing with a letter of **"CHINA."** Thus, for example: **"C**hinese **H**onour **I**s **N**ow **A**bhorrent." You can cut out and use the following form if you like.

Be sure and mark envelope, left-hand top corner, "Short Stories," and forward to A.B. Cycle Co. Limited, 59, 60, 67, 68 & 69 Chancery Lane, Holborn.

I*_____ of†_____

hereby declare that the sentence below is the only one I have sent in for this competition.

C	**H**	**I**
N	**A**	**Date of Posting.**

* State whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss. † Full address to ensure result reaching you.

Don't forget to enclose Two Penny Stamps.

Competition closes on Saturday, September 15th, 1900.

We will give you full details of the above cash prizes, in which there is nothing to pay for any prize, and where every competitor is a Cash Prize-Winner, when we send you the results of this Competition, in which for the best solution we offer:

A £23 A.B. CYCLE FREE,

AND FURTHER PRIZES OF

2nd Class Prizes	...	**£23 Cycle for £9**	**5th Class Prizes**	...	**£23 Cycle for £12**
3rd Class Prizes	...	**£23 Cycle for £10**	**6th Class Prizes**	...	**£23 Cycle for £13**
4th Class Prizes	...	**£23 Cycle for £11**	**Consolation Prizes**	...	**£23 Cycle for £14**

56 Cycles have been won Free of Cost.

FULL NAMES AND ADDRESSES CAN BE HAD ON APPLICATION.

TAKE PARTICULAR NOTICE.—Competition is NOW OPEN, and CLOSES on Saturday, September 15th, 1900.

Enclose two penny stamps for postage of Result of Competition. As so few are able to call and inspect the machines, **we guarantee to refund the full amount paid for any prize if the owner is not perfectly satisfied** with it on arrival. Results will be declared as soon as possible. Prizes unclaimed in a week or ten days are passed on to the next winner in rotation.

£100 **If you can purchase our cheapest machine, brand new, from us, or an agent, dealer, shipper, or factor can buy one for less than FIFTEEN SOVEREIGNS, we will promptly hand you a £100 BANK OF ENGLAND NOTE.**

Send your reply to the Managing Director, marking your envelope *Short Stories*,

A.B. CYCLE CO. LTD., 59, 60, 67, 68 & 69 CHANCERY LANE, HOLBORN, W.C.

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A New Invention to keep the feet warm and dry yet allowing perfect ventilation

18 pairs post free for 1/- State size required.

A boon for tender & tired feet

WILL SUIT YOU DOWN TO THE GROUND.

OROCO M'F'G. Co. WIGAN.

PARASITENE

is a new and important remedy for GOUT, RINGWORM, ECZEMA, and all IRRITANT SKIN DISEASES.

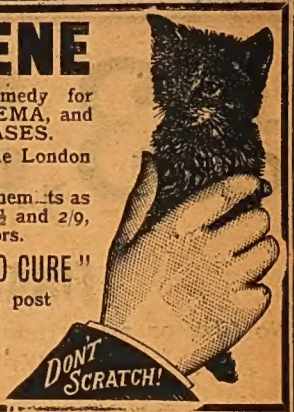
Prescribed by members of the London Medical Profession.

Can be obtained from all Chemists as a Lotion or an Ointment at 1/1½ and 2/9, or Post Free from the Proprietors.

"SKIN DISEASES & HOW TO CURE"

By Parasitene Treatment, post free from

The WEDNESFIELD CHEMICAL SYNDICATE Limited, WOLVERHAMPTON.



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A FREE TRIAL FOR 2/6

DESCRIPTION:

- New Sun Shade Eyepieces.
- Telescopic Slides Ormolu Gilt
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- Crocodile Leather Covered Body.
- Nickel and Gilt Lens Mounts.

J. N. MASTERS LTD, will send one of these handsome FIELD and MARINE GLASSES, price value 14/6, complete with Crocodile Leather Case and Sling, to any reader who mentions *Short Stories* on receipt of 2/6. If you do not approve of them, we will return your 2/6 in full. If you approve of them you send us 2/- on receipt, and 2/- each month for five months; but should you prefer to send the balance at once, send only 10/6, as we allow you 1/6 discount; or you may send 13/- at once, and if you do not approve of the Glasses we will return your 13/- in full.

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